THE PERMEATION OF CALVIN'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC THOUGHT INTO GENEVAN LIFE: 1536-1564

by

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INTRODUCTION

Ever since the appearance of Max Weber's insightful thesis into the relationship between the rise and religious decay of Calvinism and the rise of the modern capitalistic spirit, a debate has raged as to the exact nature of the influence of Calvin on economic theory and practice. But whether this argument is carried out on a sweeping scale between Weber, Sombart, Fanfani and Robertson,[1] or in the analysis of one particular aspect of the argument, such as the Tawney-Trevor Roper debate over the origins of the English Civil War, it almost always ignores the economic thought of Calvin himself. Not that ignorance of Calvin's thought has been total--Albert Hyma and Georgia Harkness skim the surface. But not till the appearance of André Bielér's splendid study, La Pensée Économique et Sociale de Calvin in 1961, did historians have a solid base for further study in

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[1] One can get an introduction to these writers in the admirably edited Protestantism and Capitalism: The Weber Thesis and Its Critics, (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1959). To the works cited and edited there should be added Kurt Samuelsson, Religion and Economic Action, trans. E. Geoffrey French (New York: Basic Books, 1961). This Swedish economist's Ekonomi och religion is a pretty persuasive debunking of the Weber-Tawney hypothesis.

the early, formative years of "calvinism."

In a word, Biéler discovered that for Calvin the human bond of love uniting all mankind, broken in the Fall, and partially reconstituted in Christ--this primordial unity is the key for understanding Calvin's own thought. From this bond in Christ no one is exempt or excluded, and from it flows a rather "modern" ethic in which society's good and the individual's responsibilities are justly balanced. Biéler's discoveries are rather fully exposed in the first chapter of this work.

Our attempt is to build an investigation on the base laid by Biéler. Given Calvin's thought--did it permeate into Genevan life while he was alive and influential there? And if it did permeate, were the results good or bad? Was society strengthened or weakened, the individual exploited or protected? So the outline of the thesis develops rather naturally:

Chapter I--Calvin's Social and Economic Thought.

Chapter II--Calvin's Geneva: Two Struggles for Freedom. Here it is assumed that one cannot undertake a search for Calvin's influence unless he knows the historical situation, the city's struggle for freedom from the Duke of Savoy, and the church's struggle for freedom from a state (the city Council) which would exercise improper control.

Chapter III--The Permeation of Calvin's Views: Positive Results. Here and in the next chapter we arrive at the heart of the thesis, as we attempt to assess both the degree of permeation and the good it accomplished.

Chapter IV--The Permeation of Calvin's Views: Negative Results. This chapter complements the previous one and indicates some areas where the penetration of Calvin's views were harmful to society or to the individual.

Chapter V--Success and Failure: a Critique of the Permeation of Calvin's Thought. The success or failure of the investigation should be evaluated on the basis of chapters III and IV; but there still remains the necessity to try to account for the negative results by a three-fold analysis, socio-economic, political and theological.

Although in the main assessing Calvin's contributions positively, we conclude by attempting to trace a relationship between negative results and a certain Nestorian tinge in Calvin's Christology. George W. Forell has tried to account for the limitations of Luther's ethical principle--Faith Active in Love--by a "limiting principle," Luther's belief in the imminent return of Christ.[2] It would be too strong, we hold, to attribute such a clear relationship between Chris-

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[2]George W. Forell, Faith Active in Love (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1954). See especially Chapter 7.

tology and social emphases in Calvin's thought, but as a heuristic tool we think that relationship has interesting future possibilities and will force further investigation, not only in reference to Calvin, but also to classical Protestant thought after Calvin (especially Puritan), and to medieval thought before him.

Our study does not really bear on the Weber-Tawney thesis concerning the positive relationship between Calvinism and Capitalism, because proponents and defenders of that view are generally careful to show that they are not talking about Calvin, but about later Calvinists. But if they are right about that relationship, then this study ought to cast some light on the differences between Calvin and his spiritual heirs. But this, like Christology, is really a separate study.

CHAPTER I

CALVIN'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC THOUGHT

No English-speaking scholar has given us a clear picture of John Calvin's social and economic thought. Williston Walker gave bits and pieces in his excellent work on the Genevan Reformer, John Calvin. Georgia Harkness went a bit further in her John Calvin: The Man and His Ethics. But the job of digging through hundreds of sermons and commentaries for the purpose of discovering Calvin's views was neglected till very recently. In 1961 André Biéler, pastor and economist, published what was essentially his Ph.D. thesis in economic history at the University of Geneva under the title, La Pensée Économique et Sociale de Calvin.[1] In the first 183 pages Biéler presents a brief history of the calvinistic sector of the Reformation. In the remainder of the book, which runs to 520 pages plus bibliography and several indices, Biéler does an admirable job of wiping clear the mists of history and exposing to our sight the views of the Reformer in this area.

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[1]André Biéler, La Pensée Économique et Sociale de Calvin (Geneva: Libraire de l'Universite, 1961).

It seems essential to begin this work with a résumé of Biéler's work. To omit this would be to try to inform the reader of the permeation of Calvin's ideas, when he has no notion of what these ideas were. There is no adequate English presentation of Calvin's views to date, and the American publisher with the first rights to translate and publish Biéler's work informs me that money for the work is lacking at present.[2]

One of the chief values of Biéler's work is that he has allowed the subject to speak for himself. Hence the book consists for much of its length of long quotations from Calvin glued together with the researcher's comments. I have rather painstakingly checked Biéler's use of Calvin's writings and conclude that he has done an excellent job. Occasionally a citation will be wrong, less occasionally some lacuna will appear in the text. In all the work which follows I have quoted Calvin rather than Biéler. However, it is Biéler who has guided me to the right spot and Biéler whom I will often quote in summation. I feel, however, that in a work of this nature it is better to have the real Calvin than the slightly modernized version provided by our French pastor.

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[2]A much smaller book by Biéler has been translated into English by Paul Fuhrman under the title, The Social Humanism of Calvin. But this minuscule work seldom quotes Calvin, never refers the reader to any source, and is thus of little help.

A. The Social Structure

Man exists in community not in isolation.

> Christ might have stated simply that the name neighbor (proximi) extends indiscriminately to every man, because the whole human race is united by a sacred bond of fellowship....To make any person our neighbor, (propinquus) therefore, it is enough that he be a man; for it is not in our power to blot out our common nature.[3]

And this community means that man has economic solidarity.

> The profane writers have seen well but not so clearly [as the sacred writers] when they have taught that men are born for each other, and consequently that they ought to communicate mutually together in order to maintain the human community.[4]

> Christ does not distinguish between the natural gifts and the gifts of the Spirit; for there is neither power nor dexterity but what should be seen as coming from God. Those who employ usefully whatever God has committed to them are said to be engaged in trading (negotiari). The life of the godly is justly compared to trading, for they ought naturally to exchange and barter with each other, in order to maintain intercourse; and the industry with which every man discharges the office assigned him, the calling itself, the power of acting properly, and other gifts, are reckoned to be so many kinds of merchandise; because the use and end which they have in view is to promote mutual intercourse among men.[5]

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[3] Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia, ed. Guillaume Baum, Eduard Cunitz and Eduard Reuss (59 volumes; Brunschwick; 1863-199), Vol. 45, column 613. Hereafter referred to as Opera, followed by volume and column.

[4] Opera, 24, 679. Commentary on Ex 22:25, and parallels.

[5] Opera, 45, 568, 9. Com. Harm. Evang., Mt 25:15, 20.

This means that social inequality is the result of human sin, not the design of God.

> But it was his will that we should proceed from one fountain, in order that our desire of mutual concord might be the greater, and that each might the more freely embrace the other as his own flesh. Besides, as men were created to occupy the earth, so we ought certainly to conclude that God has marked, as with a boundary, that space of earth which would suffice for the reception of men and would prove a suitable abode for them. Any inequality which is contrary to this arrangement is nothing else than a corruption of nature which proceeds from sin. In the meantime, however, the benediction of God so prevails that the earth everywhere lies open that it may have its inhabitants, and that an immense multitude of men may find, in some part of the globe, their home.[6]

And, indeed this social order has been turned upside down by the sin of man.

> There is no doubt that God wishes here to correct this incredulity which too often reigns in us when each thinks that he will never have enough: "Oh something might happen to me, and it is necessary to provide for such an event." See how it is that men always reach and grab to themselves and are not able to be satisfied. And the more they have, the more their greed is enflamed, like a dropsied person when he drinks. And what is the cause of it? This diabolical unbelief when we do not know that the proper office of God is to nourish us...And what is the cause that men are thus insatiable, and that they burn in such greed, that they always lure to themselves and amass great provisions and are never content? Do we want to have contentment? Let us turn to God knowing that when he blesses us we shall have sufficient to be nourished and sustained.[7]

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[6] Opera, 23, 28. Commentarius in Genesin, Gen 1:28.

[7] Opera, 28, 200f. Sermon CXLI on Deuteronomy 29: 19-22.

When sin overturns the original social order then waste, hoarding for speculation, and monopoly follow, the poor are oppressed and the natural order of things is perverted.

> There will be those who would rather have the wheat spoil in the granary so that it will be eaten by vermin, so that it can be sold when there is want (for they only wish to starve the poor people)....See the wheat collected; how well our Lord has poured out his grace and his benediction so that the poor world would be nourished. But he [the speculator] will gather it in granaries and will lock it up securely, indeed it mounts up, till finally the cry of famine is heard and this is no longer possible. And what will happen? It will be spoiled and rotten. It is true that our Lord is mocked sometimes by those who think to have much profit....But these, however, as much as is possible for them, entomb the grace of God, as if they warred against his bounty and against the paternal love which he displays towards everyone. But insofar as they do this, they pervert the whole order of nature.[8]

B. The Partial Redemption of Society in the Church

But God has not been content to allow the original order to rest in its present perverted form. He has begun the restoration of nature and the universe in Jesus Christ, and the new life that He has inaugurated for mankind is a life in community, a life wrapped up with others in Christ's church.

> It is not sufficient, indeed, for us to comprehend in mind and thought the multitude of the elect, un-

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[8] Opera, 27, 639. Sermon CXIX on Dt 20:16-20. My translation takes into account several minor syntax corrections by Bieler.

> less we consider the unity of the church as that into which we are convinced we have been truly engrafted. For no hope of future inheritance remains to us unless we have been united with all other members under Christ, our Head.[9]

This means that Christ's gifts to individual members of the church are shared with the whole church.

> "The Communion of the saints"...very well expresses what the church is. It is as if one said that the saints are gathered into the society of Christ on the principle that whatever benefits God confers upon them, they should in turn share with one another. This does not, however, rule out diversity of graces, inasmuch as we know the gifts of the Spirit are variously distributed.[10]

The old solidarity, once lost, is now restored in the church, in the union of those who would strive to follow Christ's life.

> For it is necessary for us to come back to this principle, that God wishes us to be like himself inasmuch as he has adopted us for his children and has declared himself our Father. That has always been so, but today in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, God has shown the bowels of his mercy, as the Scripture speaks--for it is not able to express sufficiently the infinite bounty which God has shown us in our Lord Jesus Christ. Since thus it is that God has made us feel more than ever his inestimable love, so much more should we on our side strain to follow him and to conform ourselves to his example.[11]

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[9] John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), IV,i, 2. Unless there is a serious difference in the French edition of 1560, I shall also use this recent translation from Calvin's 1559 Latin edition in further citations.

[10] Ibid., IV, i, 3.

[11] Opera, 28, 178. Sermon CXXXIX on Dt 24:10-13.

This means that pride in worldly position, whether of wealth, station or nationality, has no place within the church.

> Behold how a lowly brother ought to glory in his exaltation; for if he be accepted of God, he has sufficient consolation in his adoption alone, so as not to grieve unduly for a less prosperous state of life. 'But the rich, in that he is made low,' or 'in his lowness....' for this admonition pertains to all those who excel in honors or in nobility, or in any other external thing. He binds them to glory in their lowness or littleness in order to repress the haughtiness of those who are usually inflated with prosperity....For Christ, who is not a teacher except of babes, checks by his doctrine all the haughtiness of the flesh.[12]

> And thus God shows that the whole body of the human race are under his care, so that he would not have those that are farthest off exposed to the wanton desires of the reprobate. In other points, he provided special privileges for his elect people; but here, because he created all men without exception after his own image, he takes them under his care and protection, so that none might injure them with impunity.[13]

But it is particularly in the area of the social relations of labor that Christ's work of regeneration is a transforming power. If they live in Christ, superiors and subordinates recover right relationships of authority without oppression and subordination without recrimination.

> Whoever has some superiority over others ought to abstain from all tyranny, we ought to be humane to-

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[12] Opera, 55, 388. Commentarius in Iacobi Apostoli Epistolam. Jas 1:9,10.

[13] Opera, 24, 622. Commentary on Lev 24:22.

> ward those whom God has subjected to us so not to dominate them in cruelty, nor to extract (tirer) from them all that we are able, but that we think of treating them humanely as our brothers. And although today we may not all be of the same lineage, as the Jews were, yet it ought to be sufficient for us that we have one Father and Master in heaven, as he has taught us. For, by means of our Lord Jesus Christ we are finally united so that there is a fraternity among us that cannot be violated without renouncing the adoption that God has made of us. And thus whoever desire to be held and known as children of God must for that reason deport themselves amiably toward those able to be commanded. And besides, it is necessary for us to come to an accounting: if we wish to obtain mercy from our God and to be supported by his grace, let us be advised to do the same toward those who are subject to us.[14]

But this restoration of man to his original state begun by God in Christ is not yet complete. Human society disrupted by sin contains a hierarchy of social relations which Calvin, like Luther, spoke of as the political order. For example, the normal order between men and women, which fundamentally is a relation of equality,[15] remains in this present provisory society an unequal relationship. The church cannot suppress this external or political order under pretext of Christian liberty. But it can, in this and other hierarchical human relationships, plead for mercy and mutual regard.

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[14] Opera, 27, 350. Sermon XCVI on Dt 15:16-23.

[15] See, for example, the comments of Calvin on 1 Corinthians 11:3.

> We have seen above how each of us is subject to his neighbors, and we are thus only able to commune with each other by rendering some duty as by subjection. And inasmuch as that is regrettable to us (for each wishes to be above his fellow men and we hold this exalted position in such high regard) so that it is hard for us to humble ourselves. Yet seeing that if we fear God it need not be strange to be subject to our neighbors, for God has created us in this condition. Behold thus in general how charity obliges us toward each other so that it is not necessary that we disdain this or to be bothered by it, as if we estimated the other unworthy that he should thus be served. For as regards God, we must bend the neck or our rebellion will surely ruin us. But now St. Paul goes further and shows that there are certain degrees among men. For although in general there should be this rule that we have stated--that each busy himself in acquitting himself of his duty--nevertheless there is in particular a greater subjection--of a son to his father and the wife to her husband, of subjects to their superiors--so that it is not alike among all men. We have already said that there is a fraternity among the men farthest apart (les plus estrangers) on earth, inasmuch as there is a natural communion to which everyone is beholden. But when God has joined persons by a bond more close and more holy, it is necessary that each regard the one closest to himself. For when the woman is joined with her husband she is given to him for protection and is like a part of the body. And next there is also a special subjection that the husband, although he be above and in authority, nevertheless this does not detract from his obligations to his wife; for she is his companion in life and death. It is the same with children toward their fathers and fathers toward their children, each in his place and quality, as subjects toward princes and superiors and servants toward their masters.[16]

This acceptance of the political order with its inbuilt hierarchies was an essential and therefore conservative

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[16] Opera, 51, 735. Sermon XXXIX on Ephesians 5:22-26.

influence on Calvin's social and economic thought. Though it is the result of human sin, and not (as we shall see) the sin of the individual of mean estate, yet inequalities must be tolerated. Obedience to a superior is obedience to Christ, even if that superior be an unworthy one.

> Now we note that sometimes God will raise up people who are not worthy of any honor. Why? To vex us. For if we were subject to him as we ought to be, it is certain that he would rule in such a manner over us that we would be able to reflect that he governs us and that he presides in the midst of us; that those who would be in the estate of justice would be like small angels and one would not see kings nor princes rule in this world in tyranny nor in arrogance, but the image of God would shine in them. But because we keep God far from us, it is necessary that he draw away and withhold his benediction, and that he place people to rule over us who pervert all right and equity. This then is a sign that God has withdrawn his grace far from us, seeing that we have[17] very little which indicates that he has us in his protection, for we have not wished to be subject to him. But whatever the case may be, let us always come back to this, that our Lord knows well what is proper for us. Therefore, let each one take heed not to pass beyond his sphere. The one who is poor, let him bend his neck and know that God has wished to bring him into subjection, and that by this means we demonstrate that we are truly his flock, that we are not savage beasts, that we are not so difficult to govern, that we only suffer that he lead us as it will please him, and that he dispose of us in such a manner that however small our

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[17]By what looks like the scribal error of homoioteleuton (omitting a phrase because similar endings cause the eye to drop to the lower one and leave out the intervening material) Bieler omits "peu, porter qu'il nous eust en sa protection, car nous ne luy avons..."; so that he reads simply, "seeing that we have not wished to be subject to him."

> condition may be, or how despised by the world, we bear it patiently.[18]

But it is clear that for Calvin the Christian has another standard than that of the world in the conduct of human relationships. Where the civil law and the law of love conflict, the Christian must choose the latter. That this is not usually done, Calvin was fully aware. And he was no rationalistic moralist who thought that just calling the golden rule to people's attention would more or less automatically insure its application. So his words have a certain harshness, quite unpleasing to his upper-class hearer.

> In the treatment of their slaves, the laws granted to the master a vast amount of power. Whatever had thus been sanctioned by the civil code was regarded by many as in itself lawful. But...God allows to masters no power over them beyond what is consistent with the law of love. When philosophers attempt to give to the principles of equity their full effect in restraining the excess of severity to slaves, they teach that masters ought to treat them in the same manner as hired servants. But they never look beyond utility; and, in judging even of that, they inquire only what is advantageous to the head of the family, or conducive to good order. But Paul here proceeds on a very different principle. He lays down what is lawful according to the divine appointment, and how far they, too, are debtors to their servants....Masters and servants are not indeed on the same level; but there is a mutual law which binds them. By this law, servants are placed under the authority of their masters; and, by the same law, due regard being had to the difference of these stations, masters lie under certain obligations to their servants. This analogy is the only true standard....for we are all

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[18] Opera, 54, 558f. Sermon XIV on Titus 3:1,2.

> ready enough to demand what is due to ourselves; but, when our own duty comes to be performed, every one attempts to plead exemption. It is chiefly, however, among persons of authority and rank that injustice of this sort prevails.[19]

So the legitimate hierarchies of society are never absolute. There is a provisoriness about this arrangement that has fundamentally been set aside by the new human community re-established by Jesus Christ. This, plus the obvious reluctance of men to take the rule of charity seriously when their own interests are involved, means that the church must preserve its liberty and authority to speak God's Word to a sinful society. This goes a long way toward explaining the bitter battle that Calvin fought with the civil authorities in Geneva from 1536 to 1555 over the independence of the church. Calvin cites the example of John the Baptist,

> ...A good example of the constancy which all faithful doctors ought to have so that they are not afraid to irritate the great and powerful of the world every time that it is necessary.
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> For men by their nature are timid. No wonder we furl the sails (calle la voile) when it is a question of calling the great to account, who are able to take hold and rap the knuckles. For if one irritates them, it is like throwing oneself into the tomb. It is necessary thus that God labor in those whom he sends in order to give them the calmness (magnanimite) not to give in, nor to have respect of persons. That was true of John the Baptist. Thus we have proof that he was led and governed by the Spirit of God. For otherwise those who would be the most hardy will demon-

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[19] Opera, 51, 231, 2. Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli ad Ephesios, Eph 6:9.

> strate in the end that they are timid. When it is a question of some collision they throw out their gusts and foam as a first blow, that is, when they are far from blows; but when it comes to joining the issue, see how these people are paralyzed and changed! But when one has a firm hold and does not furl the sails, although to do one's duty provokes the wicked, and when one places himself in danger awaiting their audacity, when thus one perseveres, it is a sign that one is sent by the Spirit of God.[20]

Although one can hardly call Calvin's doctrine of man optimistic in any rationalistic, moralistic sense; and although he was fully aware that many in the church were hardly of Christ, yet Calvin laid great stress on the communion with Christ that comes to members of his Body, the church, having power to restore to some concrete extent the original human community restored in principle by Christ. The Holy Spirit working through the sacraments does indeed bring men into loving social relationships.

> For since we are made members of Jesus Christ, being incorporated in him and united with him as to our head (chef), there is good reason that we have together such charity and concord as the members of the same body ought to have. Wherefore, insofar as the power of the Holy Spirit is joined with the sacraments, when one receives them properly, we have by this means hope of a good means and aid to make us grow and profit in holiness of life, and especially in charity.[21]

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[20] Opera, 46, 645. Sermon LII on Mt 4:12-17; Mark 1:14, 15; Luke 3:19-20 and 4:14-15. Here are found Calvin's sermons on the Harmony of the Gospels.

[21] Opera, 5, 437. This quotation is from his Petit Traicté de la Saincte Cene.

This has immediate application within the Body of Christ.

> We shall benefit very much from the Sacrament if this thought is impressed and engraved upon our minds: that none of the brethren can be injured, despised, rejected, abused, or in any way offended by us, without at the same time, injuring, despising, and abusing Christ by the wrongs we do; that we cannot disagree with our brethren without at the same time disagreeing with Christ; that we cannot love Christ without loving him in the brethren; that we ought to take the same care of our brethren's bodies as we take of our own; for they are members of our body; and that, as no part of our body is touched by any feeling of pain which is not spread among all the rest, so we ought not to allow a brother to be affected by any evil, without being touched with compassion for him.[22]

When we look at the Genevan scene we shall find that the relationships between church and state there were quite strained a good deal of the time. This was mainly due to his insistence that the state had no business doing the business of the church. Yet it would be an egregious error to suppose that for Calvin there was any real doctrine of separation of the two realms. As with Luther, Calvin had a positive view of the duty of the state to the church. But disturbed by his analysis of the German situation, Calvin would brook no interference by the state in the area of spiritual authority.[23]

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[22] Institutes, IV, xvii, 38.

[23] Perhaps we should say that he detested such interference. He brooked it for a long time in Geneva. For it

> He [Paul] enumerates the fruits which are yielded to us by a well-regulated government. The first is a tranquil life; for magistrates are armed with the sword, in order to keep us in peace. If they did not restrain the hardihood of wicked men, every place would be full of robberies and murders. The true way of maintaining peace, therefore, is when every one obtains what is his own, and the violence of the more powerful is kept under restraint....The second fruit is the preservation of godliness (pietatis conservatio), that is, when magistrates give themselves to promote religion, to maintain the worship of God, and to take care that sacred ordinances be observed with due reverence.[24]

> ...it is indeed certain that kings, when they rightly discharge their duty, become patrons of religion and supporters of the church (nutritios ecclesiae), as Isaiah calls them (Isaiah 49:23). What then is chiefly required of kings is this--to use the sword with which they are invested to render free the worship of God. But still there are inconsiderate men who give them too much power in spiritual things, and this evil is everywhere dominant in Germany; and in these regions it prevails too much. And we now find what fruit is produced by this root, which is this--that princes, and those who are in power, think themselves so spiritual that there is no longer any church discipline; and this sacrilege greatly prevails among us; for they limit not their office by fixed and legitimate boundaries, but think that they cannot rule, except they abolish every authority in the church, and become chief judges as well in doctrine as in all spiritual government.[25]

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was not till Calvin's victory for ecclesiastical independence in 1555 that the Consistory rather than the city Council gained the power to excommunicate.

[24] Opera, 52, 267. Commentarius in Epistolam ad Timotheum I, 1 Tim 2:2. One is tempted to make the sarcastic comment that while Paul did indeed speak of government producing a peaceful life, neither here nor in Romans 13 did Paul hint that rulers were to maintain true religion.

[25] Opera, 43, 135. Praelectionum in Duodecim Prophetas Minores, Amos 7:13.

> And how many there are today under the Papacy who accumulate on kings all the authority and power they can, in order that no dispute may be made about religion; but power is to be vested in one king to determine according to his own will whatever he pleases, and this is to remain fixed without any dispute. They who at first extolled Henry, King of England, were certainly inconsiderate men; they gave him the supreme power in all things, and this always vexed me grievously; for they were guilty of blasphemy when they called him the chief head of the church under Christ.[26]

Since church and state do exist together and for the most part were co-terminous in Calvin's day, the church has certain tasks vis-à-vis the state. The first is that the church must pray for the political authorities.

> Since God appointed magistrates and princes for the preservation of mankind, however much they fall short of the divine appointment, yet we must not on that account cease to love what belongs to God, and to desire their preservation. That is the reason why believers, in whatever country they live, must not only obey the laws and the government of magistrates, but likewise in their prayers supplicate God for their salvation. Jeremiah said to the Israelites, "Pray for the peace of Babylon, for in their peace you shall have peace." (Jeremiah 29:7) The universal doctrine is this, that we should desire the continuance and peaceful condition of those governments which have been appointed by God.[27]

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[26] Ibid., 134.

[27] Opera, 52, 266. Com. Ep. Tim. I, 1 Tim 2:2. Biéler gives a second task of the church toward the state, that of warning the authorities. While I think there is no doubt that Calvin would have agreed, I don't think Biéler's lone citation proves this at all, so I omit this task from Biéler's construction. See Biéler, op. cit., p. 296 f.

A second task of the church is to encourage the state to defend the poor and weak against the rich and the powerful. This is a more important duty, so far as this paper is concerned, since it places the church against all economic injustice and makes it quite clear that preaching the Gospel is linked with the demand for social reform.

> "Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute." (Psalm 82:3) We are here briefly taught that a just and well-regulated government will be distinguished for maintaining the rights of the poor and afflicted ....It cannot be doubted that rulers are bound to observe justice towards all men without distinction. But the prophet, with much propriety, represents them as appointed to be the defenders of the miserable and oppressed, both because such persons stand in need of the assistance of others, and because they can only obtain this where rulers are free from avarice, ambition, and other vices. The end, therefore, for which judges bear the sword is to restrain the wicked, and thus to prevent violence from prevailing among men, who are so much disposed to become disorderly and outrageous. According as men increase in strength, they become proportionally audacious in oppressing the weak; and hence it is rare that rich men resort to magistrates for help, except when they happen to fall out among themselves. From these remarks, it is very obvious why the cause of the poor and needy is here chiefly commended to rulers; for those who are exposed an easy prey to the cruelty and wrongs of the rich have no less need of the assistance and protection of magistrates than the sick have of the aid of the physician. Were the truth deeply fixed in the minds of kings and other judges, that they are appointed to be the guardians of the poor (tutores pauperibus), and that a special part of this duty lies in resisting the wrongs which are done to them, and in repressing all unrighteous violence, perfect righteousness would become triumphant through the whole world. Whoever thinks it not beneath him to defend the poor, instead of allowing himself to be carried

> hither and thither by favor, will have a regard only to what is right.[28] As God honors the poor, then every one who repudiates them, reverses the order of God.[29]

Indeed, for Calvin it was the treatment of the weak in society that really determined the value of a political regime. From the following quotation it can be seen clearly that Calvin was not a pastor impressed with the outward, superficial morality of either the wealthy or those in responsible positions. His was the critique which pierced below superficial standards of right and wrong and battled about interest rates, employment opportunities, a fair judiciary and the like.

> As to strangers and orphans and widows, they are often mentioned: for strangers as well as orphans and widows were almost destitute of protection, and were subject to many wrongs, as though they were exposed as a prey. Hence, whenever a right government is referred to, God mentions strangers and orphans and widows; for it might hence be easily understood of what kind was the public administration of justice; for when others obtain their right, it is no wonder, since they have advocates to defend their cause, and they have also the aid of friends. Thus every one who defends his own cause, obtains at least some portion of his right. But when strangers and orphans and widows are not unjustly dealt with, it is evidence of real integrity.[30]

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[28] Opera, 38, 769, 70. Commentarii in Librum Psalmorum, Ps 82:3.

[29] Opera, 55, 399. Com. Iac. Epis., Jas 2:5.

[30] Opera, 37, 765. Praelectiones in Ieremiae Prophetias, Jer 7:6.

A third task of the church in its relations to the state is the old medieval one of calling on the political authority for help in enforcing ecclesiastical discipline. It could, and I think should, be argued that if the church does not want the state to usurp spiritual powers, it should not call on the state to enforce church discipline. But this criticism so easy to make now in the United States, was very difficult to perceive in sixteenth century Europe against a background of twelve centuries of just such practice. It is also true that a co-terminous state and church tended to blur the distinction between ecclesiastical and civil discipline. We shall come back to this point later, especially in Chapter IV.

Does this last provision mean that Calvin's ideal was what Eugene Choisy has called a theocracy?[31] Biéler strongly resists this term with its overtones of ecclesiastical control over the whole life of a city or state and insists that Calvin was mainly interested in the freedom of the church. "The Reformed ideal is a church politically free,

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[31]Eugene Choisy, La Théocratie à Genève au Temps de Calvin (Geneva: Eggimann and Company, 1897). Biéler argues that Choisy used the wrong term when he chose the word theocratie. And Choisy admits that if one uses the term to mean "the domination of the church over the state, or in the sense of the domination of the clergy over the political government it is completely impossible not to recognize that there had not been a theocracy in Geneva." p. 6. The italics are Choisy's.

entirely dependant on the Word of God, in a state which respects and favors its ministry."[32] This paper does not depend on whether Biéler is right or not. But it leads us to expect the church and state to have strong ties and allow whatever social and economic views Calvin had to be heard, at least, in sixteenth century Geneva.

C. Wealth and Poverty

There is nothing surprising in Calvin's belief that material blessings come from God alone, nor that terrestrial blessings should make us long for the celestial gifts.

> When we are nourished by the bread by which we are sustained, we should recognize that it comes to us from the pure bounty of our God.[33]

> He [Erasmus] reckons it improbable that, when we come into the presence of God, Christ should enjoin us to make mention of food. As if this manner of instruction were not to be found in every part of Scripture, to lead us to the expectation of heavenly blessings by giving us a taste of temporal blessings. It is indeed the true proof of our faith when we ask nothing but from God, and not only acknowledge him to be the only fountain of all blessings, but feel that his fatherly kindness extends to the smallest matters, so that he does not disdain to take care even of our flesh.[34]

But unlike the curious combination of Christianity

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[32]Biéler, p. 300.

[33]Opera, 26, 536. Sermon LIV on Dt 7:11-15.

[34]Opera, 45, 199. Com. Harm. Evang. Mt 6:11. "Give us this day our daily bread."

and Social Darwinism once common to American apologists, there in in the Reformer only denunciation of the tendancy to see misfortune and poverty as evidence of God's disfavor, or prosperity as a sign of God's blessing for personal merit or as evidence of election.

> And certainly it is an error which is by far too common among men, to look upon those who are oppressed with afflictions as condemned and reprobate. As, on the one hand, the most of men, judging of the favour of God from an uncertain and transitory state of prosperity, applaud the rich and those upon whom, as they say, fortune smiles; so, on the other hand, they insult contemptuously the wretched and miserable, and foolishly imagine that God hates them, because he does not exercise so much forbearance towards them as he does towards the reprobate. The error of which we speak, namely, that of judging wrongfully and wickedly, is one which has prevailed in all ages of the world.35

On the contrary, poverty can be a test of our obedience.

> When we conform our conversation to the way of the world, it is certain that we will always return to this: how unhappy we are if impoverished, if we are hungry, if we are tormented. But when we know that God has sent us into this world in order to prove our obedience, and that we are only passing through, and do not have any rest or repose; but that we have a heritage which is prepared for us in heaven. When, thus, we are able to arrive at that, then we shall conclude: look at our felicity which formerly was hidden from us....if our salvation thus consists in hope, it is hidden; and if it is hidden we must rejoice, not because of our perception, nor the goods which we now have, but seeing that we groan here below and understand that God calls us to himself, and

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35 Opera, 31, 418. Com. Psalmorum, Ps 41:1.

> that we are received by our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our life and the fountain of all goods. And when we shall pass beyond present things, then we shall know that poverty, affliction, anguish, concern and all such is for us reduced to nothing, and does not worsen our present condition; it is enough that God loves us, it is sufficient that his love should be declared to us and that by faith we may apprehend it.[36]

It is clear that for Calvin both riches and poverty are sacramental in the sense of being channels of grace from God to man, and means of evidencing faith on the part of men. As tests of faith we see that riches are not a sign of personal merit but of personal responsibility.

> I have nothing except from the hand of God. And where I see lack and need, I must help according to my ability those who have need; and although God does not impose any law, saying that I must give half my goods..., he commands me to do my duty.... And if we desire that God should be glorified in all the goods that he has given,[37] we should use this rule..., that nothing be held as separate but that we know that God has mixed the rich and the poor together so that we have occasion of doing good.[38]
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> Why is it then that God permits the existence of poverty here below, except because he wishes to give

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[36] Opera, 46, 780f. Sermon LXII on the Harmony of the Gospels. Mark 5:1-4 and Luke 6:20-21.

[37] Here is one of the places where Biéler in his text has slipped in a modernized version of Calvin. The verb donner (to give) takes the place of Calvin's archaic eslargir (to enlarge, widen, now spelled elargir). Ordinarily Bieler's changes are of such trivial nature.

[38] Opera, 46, 551. Sermon XLIV on the Harmony of the Gospels. Matthew 3:9-10.

> us occasion for doing good. Thus we do not attribute it to fortune when we see that one is rich and another poor; but we know that God disposes it thusly and it is not without reason. It is true that we cannot always see clearly why God will enrich one and allow another to be in poverty; we are not able to have certain discretion concerning that; and thus God wishes that we often lower our eyes in order to grant him the honor of governing the world according to his will and according to his counsel which is incomprehensible to us. But at all events we must cling to what I have touched on--which is that God distributes thus unequally the frail (caduques) goods of this world in order to investigate the good will (courage) of men; he is examining man. If a man is rich, then it is easier to judge what he is; for he has means of hurting and causing damage to his enemies; but if he abstains from doing ill, if he exercises no cruelty against his neighbors, if he holds himself in moderation without desiring more than God has given him; what a sign of his uprightness (preudhommie), which would not have been known if the occasions had not been made available. And next, if a man is liberal when he has means, seeking to do good to those in need of his help, not elevating himself in pride nor pomp but always walking soberly--this is good proof. If the other, being poor, takes patiently what it is pleasing to God to send him, not being solicitous of fraud nor other malice although he is suffering and his condition is hard--this is also a good and useful test.[39]

But Calvin was no fool. He was under no illusions that the rich were apt to pass such an examination. A few might (God softens a few hearts), but the great majority refuse Christ and idolize their possessions.

> Haughty and fastidious men, I acknowledge, view the teaching of the Gospel with contempt; but Luke expressly declares the reason why Christ was the ob-

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[39] Opera, 27, 337f. Sermon XCV on Dt 15:11-15.

> ject of their derision: they were covetous. Entertaining a firm and deep-seated conviction that the rich are happy, and that there is nothing better than to increase their wealth by every possible method, and earnestly to brood jealously over whatever they have acquired, they reject as foolish paradoxes[40] all the sayings of Christ which had a contrary tendency. And, certainly, any one that speaks of despising riches, or bestowing alms on the poor, is regarded by the covetous as a madman....But if, even when they are condemned by universal opinion they continue to flatter themselves, how much more will they ridicule as a fable that philosophy of Christ which is far removed from the ordinary belief?[41]

Consequently we should not expect the rich on their own volition to treat the poor with charity. Only the grace of God can liberate a man sufficiently to perform this.

> Moreover, that was incredible virtue [early Christain communism] that the rich men despoiled themselves of their own accord, not only of their money, but also of their land, that they might relieve the poor.[42]

With no curb most wealthy people will wallow in luxury, wasting their God-given wealth on themselves. We shall see that the sumptuary laws in Geneva tended to curb self-indulgence.[43]

> For they who abound in wealth seldom keep within the bounds of moderation, but abuse their abundance by extreme indulgences. There are, indeed, some rich men (as I have said) who suffer hunger in the midst

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[40]The French reads, "ils le rejettent comme choses absurdes et contre l'opinion commune."

[41]Opera, 45, 406. Com. Harm. Evang., Lk 16:14.

[42]Opera, 48, 97. Commentarius in Acta Apostolorum, Acts 5: 1.

[43]See below, p. 174f.

> of their abundance. For it was not without reason that the poets have imagined Tantalus to be hungry near a table well furnished. There have ever been Tantalians in the world. But James (as it has been said) does not speak of all rich men. It is enough that we see this vice commonly prevailing among the rich, that they are given too much to luxuries, to pomps and superfluities....For it was not in vain that the Lord by his prophets severely reproved those who slept on beds of ivory, who used precious ointments, who delighted themselves at their feasts with the sound of the harp, who were like fat cows in rich pastures. For all these things have been said for this end, that we may know that moderation ought to be observed, and that extravagance (intemperantiam) is displeasing to God.[44]

That many followed the Reformed Faith for other reasons than those of religious conviction, Calvin was better aware than later critics of the Reformation. In Geneva the movement for Reform was tied in with that of political independence from the Bishop of Geneva and particularly from the Duke of Savoy, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Since the latter movement was not without its economic overtones, it was to be expected that for many the teachings of Christ concerning "unrighteous Mammon" could have little support.

> But now what is the Christianity of the world? It is true that there will be enough who will protest they follow the Gospel. And even the word "Reformation" will run about in the mouth of many who are nevertheless like ravening wolves. Nor is it a question of how much to accumulate to themselves, since if they were able they would swallow every-

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[44] Opera, 55, 424, 5. Com. Iac. Epis., Jas 5:5.

> thing. They are not content to have three times what they need, but are sorry that anything escapes them. And if they know--heaven forbid--in seeing someone "who is as rich as I," they are carried away with envy and are on fire in their greed. Seeing that they are insatiable pits, they attempt to swallow all the substance that they are able to seize here and there. And one may even see them so wicked and so cruel that they would make the poor go hungry....And what is more, if they were able they would have a sun to themselves in order to say that the others have nothing in common with them. If they were able, then, it is certain that they would wish to have the whole order of God and nature changed in order to swallow everything. And yet what Christians! Yes, if one wants to believe them. But what impudence to mock God so. And it is true that one sees nothing else in the world today.... Look, I say, the common way which is even among those who make profession of living according to the Gospel.[45]

This bitterness of Calvin against the mis-use of wealth was not simply a Reformation asceticism. It was not a question of giving up the legitimate blessings of God as some sort of necessary duty, but of using God's gifts for the relief of the community. It was not asceticism, but the rule of charity to which Calvin appealed.

> ...To part with riches would not be in itself a virtue, but rather a vain ambition. Profane historians applaud Crates, a Theban, because he threw into the sea his money and all that he reckoned valuable, for he did not think that he could save himself unless his wealth were lost; as if it would not have been better to bestow on others what he imagined to be more than he needed. Certainly, as charity is the bond of perfection, [Colossians 3:14] he who deprives

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[45] Opera, 46, 549. Sermon XLIV on the Harmony of the Gospel. Mt 3:3-10.

> others, along with himself, in the use of money deserves no praise; and therefore Christ applauds not simply the selling, but liberality in assisting the poor.[46]

If there is any central theme in Calvin's social and economic thought, it is that wealth comes from God in order to be used to aid our brethren. The solidarity of the human community is such that it is inexcusable for some to have plenty and others to be in need. Calvin's favorite illustration of this was the manna in the wilderness.

> He [St. Paul] would have this to serve as a never-failing proof that men do not live by bread alone, but are divinely supported by the secret influence of his will, who maintains and preserves all things that he has created....In the manna, as in a mirror, there is presented to us an emblem of the ordinary food that we partake of....When the manna had fallen, they were commanded to gather it in heaps, so far as every one could, though at the same time, as some are more active than others, there was more gathered by some than was necessary for daily use, others less; yet no one took for his own private use more than an homer, for that was the measure that was prescribed by the Lord. This being the case, all had as much as was sufficient and no one was in want. This we have in Exodus 16:18.
>
> The Lord has not prescribed to us an homer, or any other measure according to which food of each day is to be regulated, but he has enjoined upon us frugality and temperance, and has forbidden that any one should go to excess, taking advantage of his abundance. Let those then that have riches, whether they have been left by inheritance or procured by industry and effort, consider that their abundance was not intended to be laid out in intemperance or excess, but in relieving the necessities of the

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[46] Opera, 45, 540. Com. Harm. Evang., Mk 10:20.

brethren.[47]

This means that the rich are given the task of being ministers to the poor in dispensing the goods which have been placed in their hands by the bounty of God.[48]

> When he gives to a man more than is necessary for him, he assigns to him, as if to his own person, in order to say: "It is my nature to do good, for all things proceed from me--I make the earth bear fruit, it is I who give it the vigor to produce." But now he gives me his office, he appoints me his lieutenant. And what honor is that? All the rich, then, when they do good in some way, it is certain that in doing so they are officers of God, and that they exercise what is proper to him [God][49]: namely aid the lives of their neighbors.[50]

It is important to note that Calvin did not insist on any quantitative measure of what constitutes riches or poverty. Relationship with the living God is the norm, and in light of this man takes responsibility for the use of the goods given by God. Whatever legalism may legitimately be

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[47]Opera, 50, 101, 2. Commentarius in Epistolam Secundam ad Corinthios, 2 Cor 8:15.

[48]Cf. Calvin's comments on Acts 11:29.

[49]Calvin's amanuensis must have botched up this sermon transcription. The quotation marks are mine, and might have been used in the next sentence to indicate that the rich man is speaking. Then, at the footnote, the secretary has written luy, "to him," i.e. to God, But Bieler understands it to read leur, "to them." So Bieler reconstructs it to mean: "They [the rich] exercise what is proper to themselves [as God's lieutenants.]"

[50]Opera, 28, 204f. Sermon CXLI on Dt 24:19-22.

imputed to Calvin, he was not legalistic at this point.

> Here is the rule we must keep, that each one consider how much he has received from God, as having to render account of it, in distributing kindly to his needy brothers. Thus those who do not have a great deal of goods will nevertheless have a liberal heart, and a small alms will be regarded as a large and opulent sacrifice.[51]

What Calvin was saying is that the only rule in this, as in other matters, is the rule of charity.

> ...God, in fact, everywhere charges us to help the necessities of our brethren, but he nowhere specifies the sum that, after making a calculation, we might divide between ourselves and the poor. He nowhere binds us to circumstances of times, or persons, but calls us to take the rule of love.[52]

And in good Reformation style Calvin refused to grant any merit before God in this response of faith which works out in love for the brethren. He is speaking of the passage in 1 Timothy 6:18,19, where the rich are to be "rich in good deeds, liberal and generous."

> The inference drawn by Papists from this passage, that we therefore obtain eternal life by the merit of good works is excessively frivolous. It is true that God accepts as given to himself everything that is bestowed on the poor. (Matthew 25:40) But even the most perfect hardly perform the hundredth part of their duty; and therefore our liberality does not

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[51]This quotation is too much in keeping with Calvin's views to throw away. However I cannot find the place cited. Bieler cites Opera, 28, 204, but the quotation is not found there, nor anywhere in that sermon, nor in several sermons either side of it. He is guilty of dittography in this citation and the locus is lost.

[52]Opera, 50, 98. Com. Sec. Corinthios, 2 Cor 8:8.

> deserve to be brought into account before God. So far are we from rendering full payment, that, if God should call us to a strict account, there is not one of us who would not be bankrupt. But after having reconciled us to himself by free grace, he accepts our services, such as they are, and bestows on them a reward which is not due. This recompense, therefore, does not depend on considerations of merit, but on God's gracious acceptance, and is so far from being inconsistent with the righteousness of faith, that it may be viewed as dependent on it.[53]

But Calvin did not stop with the rich. Not being a wealthy man himself, he understood that the poor also hold an office from God. They are his <u>procureurs</u> or <u>receveurs</u>. They thus become God's messengers to sound out the faith and charity of their neighbors, ambassadors with which God identifies himself.

> ...Do not defraud me at all of what belongs to me: for I appoint the poor my stewards (<u>procureurs</u>) to receive it.[54]

> But now we come to what we have said: that it is not without cause that God commands those who have something to have an open hand in order to help the poor and needy on the earth. As if he had said that God shows us clearly in what way he wishes to be served by us and by what means--that we do him hommage by means of the goods which he has given us in abundance. Indeed, for he sends us the poor as his receivers (<u>receveurs</u>). And although the alms are given to mortal creatures, yet God accepts and approves them and puts them to one's account, as if we had placed in his hands that which we give to poor.[55]

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[53] <u>Opera</u>, 52, 334. <u>Com. Ep. Tim I</u>, 1 Tim 6:19.

[54] <u>Opera</u>, 28, 204. Sermon CXLI on Dt 24:19-22.

[55] <u>Opera</u>, 27, 338. Sermon XCV on Dt 15:11-15.

And to have no concern for the brother in need, a concern which is incumbent on the Christian, is to neglect God himself.

> See thus why Moses says in this passage more particularly that God commands that one have an open hand, indeed, to the poor...who live among you. For God offers them to us so that we may have no excuse, saying, "I do not know to whom to do good." Since our Lord gives us the means it is not necessary to search for a subterfuge, for we remain always guilty when we will not use the occasion which he has offered us. Our Lord Jesus Christ goes further in saying that he will not always be with us and that the poor will be. For in approving the act which was done in his honor, seeing that the precious anointing had seemed superfluous, when his head had been anointed, he said: "This will do for now." But henceforth he sends his disciples to the poor. Why? It is as if he had said that it is not an ordinary service that he demands, nor for his own person, nor for that of God his Father, that one supply for him the precious things of the world. For he has no need of them. But he wants us to lay out among the poor what we would offer to him. And in that we note well (as I have already noted) that our Lord accepts the alms which we make to the poor as sacrifices. Thus there is absolutely no abuse in offering to him, as if he would receive nothing from our hands; but rather he sends us to do good to those who have need of our aid.[56]

Nor is this an obligation that we can discharge in a merely legalistic fashion. The poor are brothers and must be treated as such. There is no coldhearted giving in the calvinist scheme, but giving must be done with compassion.

> Let this, then, be our first proposition, that no one truly loves his brethren except he really shows

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[56] Opera, 27, 338. Sermon XCV on Dt 15:11-15.

> this whenever an occasion occurs; second, that as far as any one has the means he is bound so far to assist his brethren, for the Lord thus supplies us with the opportunity to exercise love; third, that the necessity of every one ought to be seen to, for as any one needs food and drink or other things of which we have abundance, so he requires our aid; fourth, that no act of kindness, except accompanied by sympathy [French: conjointe avec compassion] is pleasing to God. There are many apparently liberal, who yet do not feel for the miseries of their brethren.[57]

Thus, although the world still has the rich and the poor, there is in the Christian view of the world a real leveling of these two extremes. In a sense the roles of the two are reversed.

> So [James]...bids the lowly to glory in this--that they had been adopted by the Lord as his children; and the rich, because they had been brought down into the same condition, the world's vanity having been made evident to them.[58]

We shall see later that Calvin was an opponent of communism; the pre-Marxist brand was sometimes advocated by the Anabaptists of the period. Yet the needs of one's neighbor might be so great that one should not only give of his surplus but even diminish one's inheritance or require the sale of land.

> The command to sell possessions must not be literally interpreted, as if a Christian were not at liberty to

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[57] Opera, 55, 340, 1. Commentarius in Iohannis Apostoli Epistolam, 1 Jn 3:17.

[58] Opera, 55, 388. Com. Iac. Epis., Jas 1:9.

> retain anything for himself. He only intended to show that we must not be satisfied with bestowing on the poor what we can easily spare, but that we must not refuse to part with our estates, if their revenue does not supply the wants of the poor. As if he said, "Let your liberality go so far as to lessen your patrimony and dispose of your lands.[59]

And none of this liberality on the part of those who have received an abundance of God's bounty is at all dependent on the good-will of the poor. Several generations ago the wealthier classes were disturbed by the lack of gratitude shown by the poorer classes. Today we exhibit the same concern as a nation for those have-not nations which are ungrateful despite our largesse. But Calvin did not see the personal character of the needy, nor his response, as in any way affecting his position as God's ambassador to receive what the rich owe to God.

> Thus we are taught that although the poor acquit themselves badly of their duty, and though having been helped they do not bless us, yet despite that we ought not to cease doing what God commands us, knowing that the alms which go from us will serve as adequate benediction when those whom we have helped are silent.[60]

Perhaps the most refreshing insight of Calvin in the economic area was his assertion that God's economic design provides for an equitable distribution of goods among all men. Circulation of goods was regarded as a natural and good

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[59] Opera, 45, 205. Com. Harm. Evang., Mt 6:19,20.

[60] Opera, 28, 181. Sermon CXXXIX on Dt 24:10-13.

thing by Calvin. While he was as aware as Luther or any scholastic theologian of the evils perpetrated in the commercial world, he saw commerce as part of God's basic design. Part of the distribution was to take place through commerce, part through charity. He returns to the manna in the wilderness to illustrate.

> Thus as each was more especially diligent, the more he benefited his slower and less industrious neighbor without losing anything. This is aptly applied by Paul to almsgiving (II Corinthians 8:14), wherein every one bestows of what he possesses on his poor brethren, only let us remember that this is done figuratively [per anagogen]; for though there be some likeness between the manna and our daily food, yet there is a distinction between them to be observed, on which we shall elsewhere remark. Since, then, the manna was a food differing from what we commonly use, and was given daily without tillage or labour almost into their hands, it is not to be wondered that each one of the people were called to partake of it equally, and all were forbidden to take more than another. The case of ordinary food is different; for it is necessary for the preservation of human society that each should possess what is his own; that some should acquire property by purchase, that to others it should come by hereditary right, to others by the title of presentation, that each should increase his means in proportion to his diligence, or bodily strength, or other qualifications. In short, political government requires that each should hold what belongs to him. And hence it would be absurd to prescribe, as to our common food, the law which is here laid down as to the manna. And Paul also wisely makes the distinction, in enjoining that there should be an equality, not arising from a promiscuous and confused use [of property], but by the rich spontaneously and liberally relieving their hungry brethren, and not sadly or of necessity. In this way he reminds us that whatever goods we possess flow from the bounty of God, like the manna; but since each now possesses privately and separately whatever is given them, the same law is not in force for the mutual

> communication of property, whereby God bound his ancient people. Thence it appears that the distribution of the manna, as it is related by Moses, is properly applied to almsgiving. This teaching in the same way extends still further; for Paul warns the faithful not to be over-anxious about exhausting their bounty; because no man's provision failed when the Israelites by God's command divided the manna among them.[61]

When he discussed the manna as Paul makes use of it in II Corinthians, Calvin came very close, says Biéler, to saying that the social life of society should be harmonious in such a degree that it can be defined according to the famous formula: "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need."[62]

> Thus the Lord recommends to us a proportion of this nature, that we may, in so far as every one's resources admit, afford help to the needy, so that there may not be some in affluence and others in need.[63]

This economic solidarity which ought to reign among men is based on two foundations. The first is the natural order that God has instituted in making the whole of his creatures members of the same body.

> Let us know that when God has thus joined us together that each is responsible to his neighbors. If God

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[61] Opera, 24, 171, 2. Commentary on Ex 16:17.

[62] Biéler, p. 336f.

[63] Opera, 50, 101. Com. Sec. Corinthios, 2 Cor 8:13. The French translation puts it better: "...that some may not have more than enough, and others be suffering." (...afin que les uns n'en aient à superfluité, et les autres soient souffreteux.)

> had wished us each to be apart, well, we would not have this necessity which constrains us to commune (converser) with each other; but no matter what men may have, it is necessary that they communicate together. So then, we must return there and recognize that God has wanted to make us like members of a body....When we will regard each other in this manner, each will then conclude: I see my neighbor who has need of me and if I were in such extremity, I would wish to be helped; I must therefore do just that. In short, this communication of which St. Paul speaks here is the fraternal affection which proceeds from the regard that we have when God has joined us together and has united as in one body, because he wants each to employ himself for his neighbors, so that no one is addicted to his own person but that we serve all in common.[64]

The second basis for economic solidarity is the new solidarity which Jesus Christ created among men. "His sacrifice [says Biéler] gives to all humans the possibility of recovering among themselves the fraternity which has been shattered by their sin."[65]

> In so far as we have been plunged into all ordure, into all pollution (as I have said), so that body and soul have been so much soiled...that it had alienated us fully from God. But he has rescued us from that; and now we are citizens of the kingdom of the heavens, we are reconciled with him, we are adopted as children of the father....Behold then how we are sollicitous to humble ourselves; and in making acknowledgment to God for the goods and gifts which we have received from him, of using them in such a way that everything redounds to his honor, that he should be served by us and that each should apply himself to his obedience, and then afterwards

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[64] Opera, 53, 639f. Sermon LIII on I Timothy 6:17-19.

[65] Biéler, p. 337.

that we should incite ourselves to have compassion for our neighbors.[66]

Therefore, since God's economic design rests on human solidarity--both original and reconstituted among Christians in Christ--anything which hinders the just flow of goods from one to another is sinful. Monopoly and speculation on goods are crimes against God and his Kingdom. Calvin was sharp in his condemnation of such practices.

> Accordingly he [Isaiah] describes the feelings of those who never have enough, and whom no wealth can satisfy. So great is the keenness of covetous men that they desire to have everything possessed by themselves alone, and reckon everything that is obtained by others to be something which they want and which has been taken from them. Hence the apt observation of Chrysostom that "covetous men, if they could, would willingly take the sun from the poor," for they envy their brethren the common elements, and would gladly swallow them up; not that they might enjoy them, but because such is the madness to which their greed carries them. All the while they do not consider that they need the assistance of others, that a man left alone can do nothing. All their care is to scrape together as much as they can, and thus they swallow up everything by their covetousness....
>
> Were they alone, they could not plough, or reap, or perform other offices indispensable to their subsistence, or supply themselves with the necessities of life. For God has linked men so closely together that they need the assistance and labor of each other; and none but a madman would disdain other men as hurtful or useless to him.[67]

Commenting on Amos 8:6, "...that we may buy the poor

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[66] Opera, 28, 206. Sermon CXLI on Dt 24:19-22.

[67] Opera, 36, 108. Commentarii in Isaiam Prophetam, Is 5:8. "Woe to those who join house to house and field to field."

for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes, yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat," Calvin wrote:

> Here still he speaks of the avarice of the rich, who in time of scarcity held the poor subject to their obnoxious selves and reduced them to slavery....We indeed know what is the influence of poverty and pressing want, when men are oppressed with famine; they would rather a hundred times sell their life than not to rescue themselves even by an invaluable price. For what else is food but the support of life? ...Hence the Prophet condemns this iniquity--that the rich gaped for such an opportunity. They saw that wheat was high in price: "Now is the time for the poor to come into our possession." ...But the other circumstance increases this iniquity--that they sold the refuse of the wheat; and when they reduced to bondage the poor, they did not feed them; they mingled filth and offscourings with the wheat, as it is wont to be done. For we know that such robbers usually do this when want presses upon the common people. They sell barley for wheat and for barley they sell chaff and refuse. This kind of wrong is not new or unusual....[68]

But not only are such men thieves, Calvin even called those who refuse to communicate the goods God has bestowed "murderers." It is not, said Calvin, that God needs human intermediaries to support the poor, but "he does not want the rich to be like savage beasts, biting and eating up the poor, sucking up their blood." They should, instead, help those who have need.

> Otherwise they are like murderers when they see their neighbors grow faint and yet do not have an open hand to support them. It is certain, I say,

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[68] Opera, 43, 145, 6. Duodecim Prophetas Minores, Amos 8:6.

that in this they are like murderers.[69]

There must have been more than one way to hinder economic justice in sixteenth-century Geneva. The means whereby the rich can cause the poor to suffer are multiform. Calvin struck angrily against one such form of social oppression, practiced in pre-Christian Israel, and later coming under the condemnation of James.

> He now condemns cruelty, the invariable companion of avarice. But he refers only to one kind, which above all others merits to be deemed odious. For if a humane and just man (as Solomon says in Proverbs 12:10) regards the life of his beast, it is a monstrous barbarity when man feels no pity towards the man whose sweat he has employed for his own benefit....For what can be more base than that they who supply us with bread by their labor should pine away through want? And yet this monstrous thing is common; for there are many of such a tyrannical disposition that they think that the rest of mankind live only for their benefit.
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> But he says that this hire cries, for whatever men retain either by fraud or by violence of what belongs to another, it calls for vengeance as it were by a loud voice. We ought to notice what he adds, that the cries of the poor come to the ears of God, so that we may know that the wrong done to them shall not be unpunished. They, therefore, who are oppressed by the unjust ought resignedly to sustain their evils, because they will have God as their champion: (vindex).[70]

It is clear that Calvin did not think inequalities of station or possession will cease in this life. He was not one to overturn the political structure of society. But in

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[69] Opera, 46, 552. Sermon XLIV on the Harmony of the Gospels. Mt 3:9-10.

[70] Opera, 55, 424. Com. Iac. Ep., Jas 5:4.

the church these inequalities will not shatter social solidarity, but rather mankind will have clemency and kindness as the cement for human relations.

> I understand ἰσότητα simply as meaning an equality of proportional right (pro aequalitate iuris analogici) as Aristotle terms it. In this signification it is made use of also in Colossians 4:1, where he exhorts "masters to give to their servants what is equal." He certainly does not mean that they should be equal in condition and station, but by this term he expresses that humanity and clemency and kind treatment which masters, in their turn, owe to their servants. Thus the Lord recommends to us a proportion of this nature that we may, in so far as every one's resources admit, afford help to the needy, that there may not be some in affluence and others in need.[71]

This brings us to the role of property in God's design for man's welfare. To begin with, of course, God is the sole owner of everything in the world. But man is given a secondary control over the world for which he must make an accounting to God. But this control or stewardship is given by God to be used for the common good.

> "They had one heart." Thus he proceeds, beginning with their mind. Then he adds their bountifulness as a fruit which is produced. Thereby he indicates that they were truly joined in brotherly love, that they testified to this by the rich selling what was theirs to sustain the poor. And this is a singular example of love--this is why it is recorded by Luke, so that we may know that we must relieve the need of our brother in need.[72]

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[71] Opera, 50, 101. Com. Sec. Corinthios, 2 Cor 8:13.

[72] Opera, 48, 59. Com. Acta Apost., Acts 2:44.

Yet Calvin lashed out sharply against those who would make the communism of the primitive church the proper economic order.

> Nor is civil order disturbed, which allows each individual to own his private possessions, since it is necessary to keep peace among men that the ownership of property should be distinct and personal among them.[73]

> Truly this place needs a sane exposition, because of fanatic spirits who imagine a κοινωνία of goods, in which all civil government is taken away, as in this age the Anabaptists have raged, because they taught there was no church unless all men's goods were gathered together in one heap, in order that everyone might lay hold on it.[74]

Human need determines the right use of ownership in the community reconstituted by Christ. According to Biéler, we have "a middle way between communism and individualism. It is a disposition of private property in the service of the community."[75]

> Surely he [Luke] points out another order when he says that there was choice made in the distribution ....For this having in common (communitas) must be limited to the circumstance which follow immediately: namely, that the poor might be relieved as every man had need.[76]

And the claim of the monasteries that they followed

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[73] Institutes IV, i, 3.

[74] Opera, 48, 59. Com. Acta Apost., Acts 2:44.

[75] Biéler, p. 354.

[76] Opera, 48, 59, 60. Com. Acta Apost., Acts 2:44.

the rule of Christ and the early church by relinquishing private ownership of property was strongly repudiated by Calvin.

> Whence we gather that which I just said, that they brought forth and made common their goods for no other purpose save only that they might relieve the present necessity. And the impudency of the monks was ridiculous who professed that they observed the apostles' rule because they call nothing their own; and yet, nevertheless, they neither sell anything nor do they care if someone is in need, but they stuff their idle bellies with the blood of the poor, neither do they regard any other thing in their having things in common, save only that they may be well filled and daintily, although all the whole world be hungry. Wherein, then, are they like the first disciples with whom they would like to be able to compare?[77]

Within the church the task of seeing that a certain minimum amount of help is given to the poor was assigned to the deacons. We shall be concerned with the diaconate at greater length below, but their office is so direct an outgrowth of Calvin's understanding of the primitive church and of his concern for the economic solidarity of all within the church, that they deserve mention in this overview.

> The care of the poor was entrusted to the deacons. However, two kinds are mentioned in the letter to the Romans: "He that gives, let him do it with simplicity;...he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness" (Romans 12:8). Since it is certain that Paul is speaking of the public office of the church, there must have been two distinct grades. Unless my judgment deceive me, in the first clause he designates the deacons who distribute the alms. But the second

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[77] Ibid., p. 131.

> refers to those who had devoted themselves to the care of the poor and sick. Of this sort were the widows whom Paul mentions to Timothy (1 Timothy 5: 9-10). Women could fill no other public office than to devote themselves to the care of the poor. If we accept this (as it must be accepted[78]), there will be two kinds of deacons: one to serve the church in administering the affairs of the poor; the other, in caring for the poor themselves. But even though the term διάκονοι itself has a wider application, Scripture specifically designates as deacons those whom the church has appointed to distribute alms and take care of the poor, and serve as stewards of the common chest of the poor. Their origin, institution, and office are described by Luke in the Acts (Acts 6:3).[79]

If the concern of the church for the poorer members of its body is expressed concretely in the organization and work of the diaconate, the temptation of the church is to allow a sop be thrown to the poor while the church itself takes the side of wealth and power. Discussing the account of the persecution of the primitive church by Demetrius the silversmith, Calvin compared that example of bad religion in league with Mammon to the papacy:

> Today what zeal urges the Pope, the horned bishops, the monks, and all the rabble of the Popish clergy?... They can wink at filthy blasphemies against God, so long as they lack nothing in their revenues. Only

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[78]The French adds: "...seeing that it is founded on good reason." The French edition was a year later than the 1559 Latin edition, usually [though for no good reason] regarded as definitive. In theological matters Calvin's own reason was usually enough to win from him the adjective "good."

[79]Institutes, IV, iii, 9. Further discussion of the diaconate may be found in IV, iv, 508, and Opera, 53, p. 290f, and 299, in Sermons on 1 Timothy.

> they are more than courageous in maintaining such superstitions as are most agreeable for their purpose. Therefore, being taught by such examples, let us learn to make choice of such a kind of life as is agreeable to the doctrine of Christ, lest desire of gain provoke us to enter a wicked and ungodly combat.[80]

Of considerable importance to us in this paper is Calvin's view of the economic role of the state. In fact, we shall spend considerable space in Chapter III on the question of whether the government adopted and applied Calvin's social and economic position in the governing of Geneva and environs. What is the state's role in economic affairs? First, it should be understood that the state has the right and duty to intervene in the economic life of the people, just as formerly we saw that the magistrate had the task of aiding the establishment of true religion.

> ...the practice of civil government. Its function among men...does not merely see to it...that men breathe, eat, drink and are kept warm, even though it surely embraces these activities when it provides for their living together. It does not, I repeat, look to this only, but also prevents idolatry, sacrilege against God's name, blasphemies against his truth, and other public offenses against religion from arising and spreading among the people; it prevents the public peace from being disturbed; it provides that each man may keep his property safe and sound; that men may carry on blameless intercourse among themselves; that honesty and modesty may be preserved among men. In short, it provides that a public manifestation of religion may exist among Christians, and that humanity be maintained among

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[80] Opera, 48, 450. Com. Acta Apost., Acts 19:23.

men.[81]

In addition, then, to insuring that men have the necessities of life and that honesty prevails in human relationships, the state defends the right of private property. While Calvin nowhere--so far as I can find--expanded this simple statement, he warned over and over about those who would overturn all order by demanding community of goods.[82] It is to be presumed that he would allow the government a good deal of power in enforcing this right.

But, says Biéler, what Calvin meant was "private property in the service of the community....For the political order ought to approach as much as possible the order of the church where private property is placed at the service of all."[83]

> As to strangers and orphans and widows, they are often mentioned: for strangers as well as orphans and widows were almost destitute of protection, and were subject to many wrongs, as though they were exposed as a prey. Hence, whenever a right government is referred to, God mentions strangers and orphans and widows; for it might hence be easily understood of what kind was the public administration of justice; for when others obtain their right, it is no wonder, since they have advocates to defend their

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[81] Institutes, IV, xx, 3.

[82] In addition to several places just cited, his tract Contra la Secte des Libertins, Opera, 7, 216, contains a blast at these frenetiques et esprits fantastiques.

[83] Biéler, p. 380.

> cause, and they have also the aid of friends. Thus every one who defends his own cause, obtains at least some portion of his right. But when strangers and orphans and widows are not unjustly dealt with, it is evidence of real integrity.[84]

However, it is not as clear to me as it seems to be to Biéler that the government should actually intervene to force the rule of charity. Whether the Genevan government did or not, we shall see in Chapter III. To quote Calvin to the effect that "...those who have abundance....ought to give part to those who have need and support them in their need, each according to his ability and measure"--this is certainly clear enough.[85] But that the government should intervene to enforce this is not so clear. Indeed, in one place Calvin wrote that human need should not be occasion for overturning law, even if the law is unjust. For at the end God's judgment will fall heavily on the one who treats his neighbor without mercy.

> But no matter under what necessity a man may be in, God does not wish that order (la police) should be confused, that the law (le droit) should be perverted. If the rich do not acquit themselves of their duty, if they should be so inhumane as to allow the poor to die from want, they must render account for this; but this will be before the celestial Judge.[86]

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[84] Opera, 37, 675. Praelectiones in Jere., Jer 7:6.

[85] Biéler, p. 380. Opera, 28, p. 136. Sermon CXXXVI on Dt 23:24-24:4.

[86] Opera, 28, 199. Sermon CXLI on Dt 24:19-22.

This would seem prima facie evidence that Calvin's horror of social unrest (and Francis I conducted his pogrom against the Reformation in France under the guise that it overturned all society) was so great that he found it difficult to advocate overthrowing established law and order even if the latter were bad. It is common knowledge that Calvin's dislike for rebellion against constituted authority for a time kept French Protestants from rebellion even when the circumstances were pleading for such action.[87] It would be strange if his views were to be found much different at this point.

It is true that Calvin approvingly reviewed the economic intervention of the Egyptian government under Joseph's direction.

> Whereas prosperity so intoxicates men that the greater part make no provision for themselves against the future, but absorb the present abundance by intemperance; Joseph advises the king to take care that the country may have its produce laid up in store. Besides, the common people would also form themselves to habits of frugality when they understood that this great quantity of wheat was not collected in vain by the king, but that a remedy was hereby sought for some unusual calamity. In short, because luxury generally prevails in prosperity and wastes the blessings of God,

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[87] See Institutes, IV, XX, 23-32 where he concluded his dogmatik with strong words against civil rebellion except perhaps under "magistrates of the people, appointed to restrain the willfullness of kings." The long footnote in the new LCC edition, p. 1518, has a good, brief discussion of this question with aids for further study.

the bridle of authority was necessary.[88]

And it is also true that it was up to the state to make sure that men are not cheated--that weights and measures be accurate and money be worth what it signifies.

> But now we note that if men seek to enrich themselves by bad and illicit means that it is like ripping up the landmarks or the terminals (as people say); and that is like falsehood. What should be done? That everything should be protected in the same way as weights and measures and equally money; for there would no longer be communication among men if there were not some fidelity in such things....And so we note that it is not without cause that God has commanded that they [the ancient landmarks] should be retained; for under one specie he has comprised the whole, showing that we must carefully guard that which we know to be necessary for maintaining the public weal and humanity among men.[89]

Calvin continued in this same sermon to show that this does not mean that every ancient law is good and must therefore be inviolable.

> But as to human laws, the ancient ought to be honored; one should not change them out of frivolous curiosity or in a flighty way. That would mean beginning all over again. So the ancient laws should be maintained as often as will be possible. But when necessity shows that it is necessary to change, then our Lord wishes that the means that he shows are used, the ones he places in our hands. And if one is stubborn for the ancient here, it is pure absurdity.[90]

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[88] Opera, 23, 523. Com. Gen., Gen 41:35. Biéler has erroneously cited Genesis 41:46.

[89] Opera, 27, 567. Sermon CXIV on Dt 19:14-15.

[90] Ibid.

So the state is obviously involved in the economic enterprise, in regulating buying and selling and making contracts. Furthermore, its interests are always for the commonweal--as the Puritans will later call it--else society cannot exist.

> ...judges should faithfully do justice to all, and not subvert just causes from favor or hatred. But since the word משפט mishpat, often means rectitute, it will not be unsuitable to suppose that all iniquities contrary to integrity are generally condemned....For the corruption which tends to the overthrow of judgments or, by undermining rectitude, vitiates all contracts, leaves nothing in security. But deception in weights and measures destroys and sweeps away all legitimate human society is in a manner dissolved....[91]

This means that the state must not only guard against business interests milking the life of the people by unjust methods, but must itself not be an economic liability to its citizens. Calvin affirmed the right and necessity of the state to tax its subjects, and went further to say that those in office will, of course, benefit from their position. But this is not a carte blanche; the obligations of rulers and people are mutual.

> ...Princes themselves will in turn remember that their revenues are not so much their private chests as the treasuries of the entire people (for Paul so testifies [Romans 13:6]), which cannot be squandered or despoiled without manifest injustice. Or rather, that these are almost the very blood of the people,

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[91] Opera, 24, 675. Commentary on Lev 19:35.

> which it would be the harshest inhumanity not to spare. Moreover, let them consider that their imposts and levies, and other kinds of tributes are nothing but supports of public necessity; but that to impose them upon the common folks without cause is tyrannical extortion.[92]

Perhaps we can best sum up Calvin's view of wealth, ownership and the state's economic role by quoting from Biéler's summary.

> Considered from the view point of modern law generally in actual force in the west, the Christian notion of ownership, medieval as well as reformed, is situated midway between that and the several forms of communism. It finds an expression approaching the various forms of cooperative ownership. But Calvin...always underlines in a striking fashion the distance which separates legal forms of ownership from the personal conception of the Christian believer disposing of his goods according to the criterion of charity which no law is able to express exactly. It is only in relation to this criterion that, for the reformer, ownership is legitimate.
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> As for the economic role of the state, the calvinist ideal conforms to Christian teaching of all times and joins with that of the scholastics as well as that of the other reformers. All are in accord in recognizing that it is the province of the state to maintain among men a certain economic harmony, to defend the poor against the rich and to remove from money its oppressive power....The Christian doctrine of the state is equally distant from state-socialist theories which would almost entirely abolish private property, and from liberal doctrines which deny the principle of the intervention of the state....The liberty of Christians is verified in that being strictly under the headings of faith and obedience, they are very supple and mobile in affairs of state.[93]

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[92] Institutes, IV, xx, 13.

[93] Biéler, op. cit., p. 389f.

D. Economic Activities

Under this heading Biéler conducts a much longer search than we aim to do. In addition to work and salary, which we shall examine, our Swiss pastor-economist also discusses types of work: farming, artisanry, the arts, science, commercial enterprise, and banking. The last-named occupation with its practice of usury is of special importance, and we shall examine it as well.

It is not surprising that Calvin insisted on the fact that man does not live by his work but only by the grace of God.[94] But it is this tendency to regard one's work as a thing apart that causes man to be over-anxious about his labor.

> ...Christ reproves that excessive anxiety with which men torment themselves about food and clothing, and, at the same time, applies a remedy for curing this disease.[95]

In this connection he often quoted the Psalm which refers to the man who rises up early and goes late to rest, eating the bread of anxiety, whereas the "children of God, though not without work and sollicitude,...supported by the providence of God repose in tranquillity."[96]

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[94] Opera, 45, 439. Com. Harm. Evang., Mt 14:20.

[95] Ibid., 209.

[96] Ibid. Psalm 127:2 is the Old Testament citation.

Work, like everything else in human existence, is a fallen good, but it nevertheless has its joys.

> Again, by "eating of the earth," Moses means "eating of the fruits" which proceed from it. The word which is rendered pain is also taken for trouble and fatigue. In this place it stands in antithesis with the pleasant labor in which Adam previously so employed himself, that in a sense he might be said to play; for he was not formed for idleness but for action. Therefore the Lord had placed him over a garden to be cultivated. But, whereas in that labor there had been sweet delight; now servile work is enjoined him as if he were condemned to mines.
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> And yet the asperity of this punishment also is mitigated by the clemency of God, because something of enjoyment is blended with the labors of men, lest they should be altogether ungrateful.[97]

One's work is assigned to him by God. And yet the choice of vocation is one that each man must make. It turns out, of course, that man's choice is not always the same as God's. Yet Calvin's guidance in this matter does not seem to have been very great. He did, indeed, point out that one's proper vocation "...is not to be employed at that which God condemns by his Word."[98] Is there any other guidance? Yes, there are those occupations which serve only for corruption, which are only money traps (attrapedeniers), invented by people who continually discover new ways to pick the pockets (crocheter les bourses) of fools and others given to vanity.

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[97] Opera, 23, 73. Com. Gen., Gen 3:17.

[98] Opera, 46, 554. Sermon XLIV on a Harmony of the Gospel. Matthew 3:11-12.

> But it is not enough when one can say: "Oh, I work, I have my trade, I set the pace." This is not enough; for one must be concerned whether it is good and profitable to the community and if it is able to serve our neighbors....And this is why we are compared to members of a body. But now, if one's hand be employed to give some sport to another member and that even to his damage, the whole body will by this means fall into ruin....It is certain that no occupation (mestier, i.e. metier) will be approved by him which is not useful and that does not serve the common good and that also redounds to the profit of everyone.[99]

This, of course, is in harmony with Calvin's whole social and economic thought--that man is in such solidarity that what one does must be of benefit to the whole church and the community of mankind. We might disagree with Calvin that merely to entertain one's fellow-man is unuseful and therefore not a Christian calling, yet we would certainly have to agree that Calvin was attempting to apply the rule of charity to this situation as to all others. His attempts might turn out to be legalistic in our eyes, but the legalism came after the rule and not before it. In this Calvin had Paul as tutor.

In contrast to Luther and, indeed, the whole medieval tradition, Calvin was no more suspicious of commercial enterprise than he was of any other means by which men earned a livelihood. All were meant to benefit men; all had been corrupted and used to oppress man. It was as natural for him to

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[99] Opera, 51, 639. Sermon XXXI on the Epistle to the Ephesians, 4:26-28.

use commercial illustrations to underline man's economic solidarity, as it would have been unnatural for Thomas Aquinas or Luther or the Physiocrats, whether French or Virginian.

> Those who employ usefully whatever God has committed to them are said to be engaged in trading (negotiari). The life of the godly is justly compared to trading, for they ought naturally to exchange and barter with each other, in order to maintain intercourse; and the industry with which every man discharges the office assigned him, the calling itself, the power of acting properly, and other gifts, are reckoned to be so many kinds of merchandise; because the use and end which they have in view is to promote mutual intercourse among men.[100]

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[100] Opera, 45, 569. Com. Harm. Evangelicam, Mt 25:20. Calvin is discussing the parable of the talents.

Baldwin says that the early canonists, the 12th century Decretists, were so suspicious of buying and selling, usura and turpe lucrum that "...the general theories of the Decretists on the subject of buying and selling were prefaced by a vigorous attack against the position of the merchant." John W. Baldwin, The Medieval Theories of the Just Price (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1959), p. 38. "All enterprises of buying and selling, which excluded any form of craftsmanship, were, at least in practice, extremely immoral affairs." p. 39. Baldwin says that even the theologians, while theoretically justifying the role of the merchant as necessary to society, found it hard to do so in practice. "Despite the efforts of medieval theologians to justify essentially the merchant and his activities, the profession of trade remained characteristically a sordid business." p. 67. Calvin's view, perhaps influenced by the character of Genevan life which was centered on commerce, was far more positive.

Luther had an abiding dislike for commerce, as over against agriculture. "I do not see that many good customs have ever come to a land through commerce, and in ancient times God made His people of Israel dwell away from the sea on this account, and did not let them engage much in commerce." "This I know well, that it would be much more pleasing to God if we increased agriculture and diminished commerce, and that they do much better who, according to the Scriptures, till the

Not to work, for Calvin, meant to refuse to listen to God's Word. This was true of those who were simply parasites on society--we shall see later that begging was not licit in Geneva--but also true of those who holed up in monasteries and refused to live except on public charity. Like other reformers, there was no mercy in Calvin's inkwell for these people who, not having anything to nourish them at home, go into monasteries, as into "pigsties well garnished," where they "fatten themselves at the expense of others without working." He accused them of reversing Christ's commands. "A rare exchange you may be sure, when those who are ordered to give to the poor what they justly possess are not satisfied with their own, but seize on the property of others (aliena rapiont)."[101]

But more biting than his satire of the monks--which is not nearly so wholehearted as the satire of Luther, Erasmus or Rabelais--was his defense of those who were not allowed to work because of economic oppression by the rich. To harvest a man's field, Calvin writes, everyone would cry

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soil and seek their living from it....There is still much land lying untilled." Martin Luther, An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation in Three Treatises, trans. C. M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1947), p. 106, 108.

[101] Opera, 45, 540. Com. Harm. Evang., Mt 19:21.

bitterly against this. But it is much worse to deprive a poor man of the work of his hands.[102] So to deprive a man of work is the same as cutting his throat.

> ...We know that all artisans and workingmen (gens de mestier) have their entire income in the ability to earn their livelihood, for they do not have fixed rents in fields or meadows. So since God has put their life in their hand, that is to say, in their labor, when they are deprived of necessary means it is as if one cut their throat....He has ordained that we work. But, is work denied a person? Behold, the man's life is put down.[103]

And to take away a man's tools is like taking away his bread.

> God prohibits taking as security all that is necessary to the poor to gain their livelihood and to maintain themselves. For...under the words "millstone"--upper and lower--he comprehends by synechdoche all the other instruments which the working people are not able to dispense with in their ordinary work, as if someone were by force to take from a laborer his plough, harrow or other equipment, or to empty the shop of a shoemaker or potter or someone similar, so that he was no longer able to exercise his art, being stripped of his instruments and tools. This is seen by the course of the text when it is said that life is tied up with the millstones. The one, then, who takes as security that which sustains the life of a poor man is cruel. As if he grabbed the bread from a famished man, and his life itself which is, as it were, cut off in denying the means of maintaining himself.[104]

All of this is pretty clear: work is only good work which benefits the community. Commerce is as good as any form of labor. Whenever work is denied a person, or the means

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[102] A free translation from Opera, 28, 188. Sermon CXL on Dt 24:14-18.

[103] Opera, 28, 161f. Sermon CXXXVII on Dt 24:1-6.

[104] Opera, 24, 677. Com. on Deut. 24:6.

to pursue his livelihood is taken away, then the individual and the common good suffer. Therefore society must struggle against anything which corrupts the labor of men. All that pertains to the labor of men must be instruments of common weal and not social oppression. "...No manner of life is more praiseworthy to the heart of God, than that which yields some advantage to human society."[105]

This means that man's work must be conducted under proper conditions. Anything which renders work oppressive should be condemned. The Bible does not allow one to abuse the work of another. For example, in the Timothy reference to the pay owed to **presbuteroi** who do double service, (which involves a not-too-fortunate juxtaposition of Old Testament texts about not muzzling the ox which is treading out the grain, and the laborer who is worthy of his hire) Calvin remarks:

> This is a political precept, which recommends to us equity and humanity in general....For if he forbids us to be unkind to brute animals, how much greater humanity does he demand towards men! The meaning of this statement, therefore, is the same as if it had been said in general terms that they must not make a wrong use of the labor of others.[106]
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> For there would be some who would be content at the end of three days to have killed a poor person when

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[105] Opera, 45, 570. Com. Harm. Evang., Mt 25:24.

[106] Opera, 52, 316. Com. Epis. Tim. I, 1 Tim 5:18.

> the latter would be serving them; all they care is that they have profit in them. But on the contrary, God declares to us that we must treat with such humanity those who labor for us that they should not be burdened beyond reason; but they should be able to continue [working], and have occasion to render thanks to God in their work. For there is no doubt that God has wished here to chastise (corriger) the cruelty which the rich have who would employ the poor in their service and yet not recompense them for their labor.[107]

This brings us to the fruit of work, the wage, pay or salary that one receives from his labor. Man, before God, has no right to expect to be remunerated for his labor. There is no merit to what man does, for he is bound in simple obedience to his Creator and Master. Therefore the pay we receive is a sign of the unmerited grace of God.

> We render nothing to God beyond what he has a right to claim, but are so strongly bound to his service that we owe him everything that lies in our power.... Then follows the second clause...that God is not bound to pay us hire for any of our services.
>
> It is by his own undeserved favour, and not by the value of our works, that God is induced to reward them.
>
> ...God is graciously pleased to become our debtor. [But] it would be intolerable ingratitude if on such a ground any person should indulge in proud vaunting. The kindness and liberality which God exercises towards us are so far from giving us a right to swell with foolish confidence that we are only laid under deeper obligation to him.[108]

This means literally that wages are paid to rich and

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[107] Opera, 28, 222f. Sermon CXLII on Dt 25:1-4.

[108] Opera, 45, 415, Com. Harm. Evang., Lk 17:7, the parable of the unprofitable servant.

poor alike by God; that no one is "worth" what he gets; and, consequently, for the employer to withhold from his worker what he owes is really to withhold from him what God pays him. The man who pays the salary is really paying out what does not, in fact, belong to him at all. The master is simply "paymaster" for the heavenly Master.

> God comes, as it were, to make an inventory because men will always complain: "Oh, I do not have so much to give, and I may be in need myself." But our Lord makes the inventory and discussion, and says: "How is it? This one has wheat in his granary, but is not able to give to the one who has served him and from whom he has drawn blood and labor? Is it not necessary at least that he notice the wheat that he has in his granary? He has ploughed the earth, he has cultivated it...is it not necessary that he savor some sweetness and some fruit?" Afterwards he comes to the winepress and to the stables, as if he said; "Let each take note of what he has, for according to your faculty you are required to recompense those who have worked for you and who have been the instruments of such a benediction." For if we bless God with the mouth, confessing that he it is who has blessed us, and if he has sent us people who have served to augment us, there is only fakery in us when we render thanks with the tip of our tongue and yet despise those whom God has sent to work for us.[109]

So to pay an unjust wage or to withhold wages is like sucking a poor man's blood and leaving him with nothing.

> When a robber kills a man, his object is the spoil; but he who extorts labor from a poor man and sucks, so to speak, his blood, afterwards sends him away naked and needy; this is more atrocious than if he violently killed a stranger.[110]

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[109] Opera, 27, 345f. Sermon XCV on Dt 15:11-15.

[110] Opera, 38, 383. Praelectiones in Ieremiam, Jer 22:13.

Calvin did not try to find some mathematical basis for the just wage, for the problem is first of all a spiritual one, because men in paying wages are dealing with the grace of God which goes from person to person within the human community.

> But if the master should take the pay from his servant, hiding his deed by saying: "He is my subject; I will command him as I wish." But it is necessary that the master also feel this mutual obligation which we have for one another and that he be accountable on his part to know: "I am master, but not in tyranny; I am master, but on this condition, that I am also brother; I am master, but there is a common Master in heaven, both for me and for those who are subject to me. We are all here like one family."[111]

There is, of course, no quantitative key to measure this sort of relationship. Calvin noted that the obligations of the political law which fix minimum salaries were not ever sufficient for Christians. For it is always equity before God that ought to be taken into account, and this equity can only be measured by the Gospel norm: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

> A master will have a servant; but if he draws from him all the labor that he is able without having any concern, he shows himself in that to be cruel. If he says: "But I feed him and pay him his salary." Indeed, but it is necessary to have regard also for his capacity and the service which we are able to receive from that; and especially that we regard that natural equity of not doing to another what we would not wish to be done to us. When, thus, a man has

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[111] Opera, 27, 357. Sermon XCVI on Dt 15:16-23. Biéler erroneously cites pp. 536-537.

> someone in his service he ought to consider: "If I were in his place, how would I wish to be treated. I would want to be supported."...When it is a question of our profit or damage, we are very able judges; but when it is a question of the other's, we are blind.[112]

Calvin was vehement in his denunciation of those who would allow the law of the market-place to decide how much a worker's pay should be. The Bible vigorously hits speculation of this sort, and Calvin condemned the exploitation of workers constrained by necessity to accept miserable working conditions.

> God generally has wished here to command all humanity toward the poor. For if I force a poor man to work for me and pay him only a half-wage, it is certain that I defraud him of his labor. If I make contract with someone to serve me: "Oh, well, the daily wage will be so much." But this day's wage will be so much diminished that the poor man, after having done all that he is able, will not have the wherewithal to feed himself. And why? "I see that this man has only here to work, he has no other means of working, so it is necessary that he be in my power (qu'il passe par mes mains), and I will have him, therefore, for whatever I wish." For see how often the rich, in so doing, are on the watch for occasions so that they can subtract half the wages of the poor, when the latter do not know at what to be employed. Indeed, they offer themselves, they demand only to earn a living on condition that they find it there. A rich man will take notice of that: "That one is destitute of everything, I will have him for a morsel of bread, for it is necessary for his belly's sake [lit. "in spite of his teeth"] that he give himself to me; I shall pay him half a wage and he will have to be content. When we thus use them with such rigor, even if we do not keep back the salary, it is always cruelty and we have defrauded a poor man. And when we pay

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[112] Opera, 27, 347. Sermon XCV on Dt 15:11-15.

> out money on the first day, this pretext will not benefit us at all before God. For it is necessary to know if the poor man is content.[113]

Work is simply not a piece of merchandise that can be speculated on. It comes from the sweat, or, as Calvin would say, the blood of the working person. The ultimate wages come from God and those who defraud the poor unmercifully will in the end find mercy denied to them.

> It is said in the Proverbs of Solomon that the just man has [regard] for the blood of his horse and the beasts who labor for him. But in the same way, then, when the poor whom you have employed at work, and who put their work, their sweat and the blood for you, have not been paid as is right, when you do not give them comfort and support; if they demand vengeance from God against you, who will be your lawyer, or your advocate so that you will be able to escape?[114]

But Calvin was no dreamer; he recognized that self-interest blinds man to the needs of his fellow-man; he knew that the opportunity to take advantage of another is well-night irresistable to some. So in order to guarantee a certain order about wages and working conditions, he thought certain legal contracts could express agreements arrived at, and thus level some inequalties and injustices.

> God has engraven in man's nature a law of equity.... [so] men seldom err in general principles, and therefore, with one mouth, confess that every man ought to receive what is his due; but as soon as they descend

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[113] Opera, 28, 189. Sermon CXL on Dt 24:14-18.

[114] Opera, 28, 11. Sermon CXXV on Dt 22:1-4.

> to their own affairs, perverse self-love blinds them, or at least envelopes them in such clouds that they are carried in an opposite course....The ancient saying is known, "We should deal lawfully with our friends, that we may not afterwards be obliged to go to law with them." For whence arise so many legal broils except that every one is more liberal towards himself and more niggardly towards others than he ought to be? Therefore, for the purpose of cherishing concord, firm compacts are necessary which may prevent injustice on one side or the other.[115]

E. Usury

It is necessary to conclude our study of Calvin's social and economic doctrine with a glance at his radical evaluation of the practice of lending money at interest, known generally as usura. Here in startling clarity we see Calvin's recognition of the real world, and his most shocking break with medieval tradition. It is to his credit that Calvin handled this, not as did Luther, with equivocal remarks hard to organize, but with a clear analysis of the economic realities of his day and head-on tackling of the biblical and Aristotelian bases for the medieval condemnation of the practice.

Although St. Ambrose in the 4th century interpreted the usury passage in Deuteronomy 23 in its obvious sense--one could not extract usury from a brother (i.e. another Chris-

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[115] Opera, 23, 401, 2. Com. Gen., Gen 29:14.

tian), but one could from an infidel--, this exegesis was attacked throughout the Middle Ages by theologians who argued that all are brothers and any usury was illegal. This was true despite the fact that in most lands Jews were protected by princes for their value as money-lenders, since they could lend money to Christians who were not their brothers. Illustrative of the theologians' position was Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) who wrote in a letter that the deuteronomic permission was long since abolished and, governments to the contrary, the Jews could not legitimately retain what they had exacted from others by usury, and were bound to make restitution.[116] What is certain is that usury, though prohibited in the whole Roman Empire as early as the Synod of Aachen (789) by Charlemagne,[117] was actually practiced through a series of evasions.[118]

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[116] Benjamin Nelson, The Idea of Usury (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), p. 14. John T. Noonan, Jr., The Scholastic Analysis of Usury (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 51-57, gives a good summary of Thomas' analysis of usury, which turns primarily on the theory that money--like wine--is consumed in its use, whereas usury is an attempt to sell its consumption (by receiving the principle) and charging for its use (by receiving interest).

[117] Baldwin, p. 32

[118] e.g. James W. Thompson, Economic and Social History of the Later Middle Ages (1300-1530) (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1960), p. 439 f., lists three methods of evading the charge of usury. First the sale of rent-

And while the theologians inveighed against such practices, they were used as readily by the Church as by Medicis or Fuggers. Even the Pope availed himself of the obvious advantages of interest in a world becoming more and more commercial.

> The distinction between pawnbroking, which is disreputable, and high finance, which is eminently honorable, was as familiar in the Age of Faith as in the twentieth century; and no reasonable judgment of the medieval denunciation of usury is possible, unless it is remembered that whole ranges of financial business escaped from it almost altogether. It was rarely applied to the large-scale transactions of kings, feu-

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charges, whereby a landlord needing money would sell his land from which he received rent to another, then receive it back with the stipulation that in the future he would pay the rent-charge. Partnerships or companies, commenda, gave easy means of investing money and receiving back more. A third means was to lend money without interest till the expiration date, then--both parties having agreed beforehand--the lender sued for his money and damages for the breaking of the contract, the damages, of course, amounting to a tidy profit, known as damnum emergens (damages arising from lending) or lucrum cessans, (gain lost because the money was not available to the lender). Noonan shows that partnership--commenda, societas or foena nauticum--was early allowed, there being a presumption of shared risk, though the scholastics do not make clear why risk must be the criterion, nor why money can fructify here, but not in a regular loan. p. 151f. "In the Middle Ages, the societas make risk-sharing investment a substantial form of capital-rewarding enterprise." p. 153. Of the type of investment Thompson calls rent-contract, but Noonan census (probably the root of the German Zins), the latter writes: "...The census theory tends to the adoption of an analysis, which, if not contradictory to the usury theory, at least offers an alternative to it which would make the usury theory dead in practice." p. 154. So, all other arguments and practices aside, the guaranteed triple-contract (infra, n. 122) and guaranteed census cut the ground from the argument that riskless profit is wrong. p. 358.

> dal magnates, bishops and abbots. Their subjects, squeezed to pay a foreign money-lender, might grumble or rebel, but, if an Edward III or a Count of Champagne was in the hands of financiers, who could bring either debtor or creditor to book? It was even more rarely applied to the Papacy itself; Popes regularly employed the international banking houses of the day, with a singular indifference, as was frequently complained, to the morality of their business methods, took them under their special protection, and sometimes enforced the payment of debts by the threat of excommunication.[119]

Some of the interest-taking of the late middle ages seems to have been for the benefit of the poor. In Italy, especially, monti di pieta, small banks and pawnshops usually run by the Franciscans, had been set up by the beginning of the 16th century with Papal approval, to take the place of

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[119] R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (New York: Mentor Books, 1961), p. 45, 46. Noonan observes that the theologians did not react sharply to various banking operations, suggesting either that not much was going on, or that they were less perceptive in observing the mechanisms of commercial credit than they were in treating of variations in partnership and census contracts. St. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence (c. 1450), condemns the depositum as a widely-used fraud of the leisured classes with surplus funds to invest, p. 171-175. However, banking was never considered in the same class as professional money-lending. "Indeed, a banker's social standing in thirteenth-century Florence was probably at least as good as in twentieth-century New York." p. 192. De Roover shows that "by far the best customer of the Italian banking and mercantile companies was the Church." Raymond de Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 1397-1494 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 1. Again, "There were innumerable ways of circumventing the usury prohibition and, it must be said, they were encouraged by the quibbles of the Doctors,...the latter, unwittingly, gave the merchants a chance to make the most of technicalities." de Roover, p. 11.

Jewish pawnshops which had formerly been invited in by cities and licensed to take from 20 to 50 per cent on petty loans. Generally it was argued by the Franciscans (against the Dominicans) that the five to ten per cent they charged was not really interest or usury but simply the cost of operation, especially to pay the salaries of the monti officials.[120] In Germany in 1515 the wealthy Fuggers (who had already captured the papal banking business from Florence) paid Eck, more famous for his debate with Luther, to debate at Bologna and elsewhere that the five per cent triple contract was legal. The third contract of this contractus trinus "...is essentially a guarantee of a fixed interest return."[121]

Luther gave attention to usury in several tracts, commentaries and letters, but it is difficult to state with any assurance just what he thought ought to be done. His dis-

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[120]Nelson, p. 19-22. Noonan, p. 294-310 discusses the montes pietatis at some length. Though attacked by a theologian like Cajetan, they were approved in 1516 by the Fifth Lateran Council, when that Council accepted Pope Leo's bull, Inter multiplices. Though at first financed by donations, they soon accepted the deposits of anyone who wanted to invest, paying 5 per cent on such loans, and charging borrowers from 8 to 10 per cent in Italy, and 15 per cent in Belgium. Taking the place of Jews and lombards, they are hard to distinguish from a modern savings and loan institution.

[121]Noonan, p. 208-210.

like for commerce, which we have noted above, coupled with his belief that the last days were at hand, probably made clear analysis a specie of adiaphora for Luther. In his Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation (1520), he wonders how "one gulden...can make another; and that, too, by another way than agriculture or cattle-raising...." And in the same context he lashed out against Zinskauf, a form of interest-taking.[122] But four years later in a letter to Duke John Frederick of Saxony, he called instead for regulation by the magistrate.

> ...it is highly necessary that the taking of interest should be regulated everywhere, but to abolish it entirely would not be right either, for it can be made just. I do not advise your Grace, however, to protect people in their refusal to pay interest or to prevent them from paying it, for it is not a burden laid upon people by a prince in his law, but it is a common plague that all have taken upon themselves.... In the meanwhile, let the burden rest on the consciences of those who take unjust interest. In saying this I am speaking only of the interest which does not exceed four or five per cent. This is usurious not because of the amount, but because it is a fixed income and is invested without risk, as it ought not to be. But if the rate exceeds five per cent, every prince should take measures to reduce it to four or five per cent.[123]

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[122]Luther, op. cit., p. 106-108. These annuities were a specie of rent-charges, see note 119.

[123]Luther's Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters, edd. Preserved Smith and Charles M. Jacobs (2 Volumes; Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1918), II, p. 237. When published, this old translation will be superceded by the new Luther's Works edition. See next note.

Luther's main concern was not sharp analysis of an economic fact which belonged to the sphere of the prince, but rather protection of the poor against the stul reuber (swivel-chair robber) who were "...not men at all, but wolves and irrational beasts, who do not believe there is a God."[124]

But with Calvin we get a pretty systematic study of the practice of the biblical passages involved as well as the cruelty usually associated with usura. Nelson says that Calvin charted the way to a "transvaluation of values" in his interpretation of Deuteronomy 23, demolishing the inherited exegesis; "...Calvin self-consciously and hesitatingly charted the path to a world of Universal Otherhood, where all become 'brothers' in being equally 'others'." "He succeeded in legitimatizing usury without seeming to impair the vitality either of the universalism or fraternalism of the Christian ethic."[125]

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[124]Luther, Trade and Usury, 1524 in Luther Works, Vol. 45, trans. Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), p. 308. See note 161. Nelson, p. 52, says that Luther's position abounds in "hesitations and contradictions," but this is too strong. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that usury for him lay within the sphere of the Christian prince, not the theologian.

[125]Nelson, p. 73, 74; Noonan 365-367. It is instructive that the two scholars who have devoted the most energy to the study of usury agree that Calvin makes the strongest and first major contribution to the overthrow of the scholastic analysis of usury. Conrad Summenhart, teacher of John Eck, attacked the scholastic analysis from within

It will be better, as we have done so far, to allow Calvin to speak for himself. In 1545 he tackled the problem in a letter to Sachinus.[126]

> While I have had no experience myself, I have learned from the example of others how dangerous it is to give an answer to the question on which you ask my advice. For if we wholly condemn usury (les usures), we impose tighter fetters on the conscience than God himself. Yet if we permit it in the least, many under this pretext will take an unbridled liber- which can be held in bounds by no restriction....
>
> In the first place, by no testimony of the Scripture is usury wholly condemned. For the meaning of the saying of Christ, commonly thought to be very clear, i.e. "Lend, hoping for nothing again" (Luke 6: 35), has been perverted (faulsement destournee en ce sens). As elsewhere in speaking of the sumptuous feasts and ambitious social rivalry of the rich he commands rather that they invite in the blind, the lame and the poor from the streets who cannot make a like return, so here, wishing to curb abuses in lending, he directs us to loan chiefly to those from whom there is no hope of receiving anything....The words of Christ mean that he commends serving the poor rather than the rich. Thus we do not find all

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in 1499 with his Tractatus de contractibus licitis atque illicitis. (Noonan, 206 et passim.) But "John Calvin, the Protestant leader to make the most notable contribution to the new theory, abandons completely the detailed analysis of the scholastics in order to urge one general principle: follow the Golden Rule." Noonan, p. 365. It was not, says Noonon, till the middle of the eighteenth century that a Catholic author (Scipio Maffei) dared expound the Calvinist theory of the licitness of moderate usury without his orthodoxy being challenged.

126 We assume Sachinus was the friend to whom he wrote, since the undated letter from "Iehan Calvin a quelquun de ses amys" fits the question asked by Sachinus, 7 November 1545. Sachinus' letter is found in Opera, XII, p. 210, the reply in Xa, 245-249. I am using Georgia Harkness' translation, John Calvin: the Man and His Ethics (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 204-206.

usury forbidden.

> The law of Moses (Deut. 23:19) was political, and should not influence us beyond what justice and philanthropy will bear. It could be wished that all usury, and even the name, were banished from the earth. But since this is impossible, it is necessary to concede the common good....
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> It is said in praise of a holy and God-fearing man that "he putteth not out his money to usury." [Psalm 15:5] Indeed, it is a very rare thing for a man to be honest and at the same time a usurer. The prophet Ezekiel (22:12) goes even further, for in enumerating the crimes which inflamed the wrath of the Lord against the Jews, he uses two Hebrew words, Nesec and Tarbit: one of which means usury and is derived from a root meaning to consume, while the second signifies an increase or addition, doubtless because each man contriving to further his own gain takes or rather extorts it at his neighbor's loss....
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> Now it is said that today, too, usury should be forbidden on the same grounds as among the Jews, since there is a bond of brotherhood among us. To this I reply, that in the civil state there is some difference; for the situation in which the Lord had placed the Jews, and many other circumstances, made it easy for them to engage in business among themselves without usury. Our relationship is not the same. Therefore I do not consider that usury is wholly forbidden among us, except it be repugnant to equity and charity.

Calvin was no biblical literalist, of course, and saw that justice and charity were the real Christian norms here, as in all social and economic issues. Then, turning from the Bible, he attacked the second fort thrown up against usury, the Aristotelian notion that money is barren.

> The reasoning of Saint Ambrose and of Chrysostom, that money does not beget money, is in my judgment too superficial. What does the sea beget? What does the land? I receive income from the rental of a house. Is it because the money grows there? The earth produces things from which money is made, and

> the use of a house can be bought for money. And is not money more fruitful in trade than in any other form of possession one can mention? Is it lawful to let a farm, requiring a payment in return, and unlawful to receive any profit (fruict) from the use of money?...
>
> How do merchants derive their profit? (lit.: "increase their goods") By their industry, you will say. Certainly if money is shut up in a strong-box, it will be barren--a child can see that. But whoever asks a loan of me does not intend to keep this money idle and gain nothing. The profit is not in the money itself, but in the return that comes from its use. It is necessary then to draw the conclusion that while such subtle distinctions appear on the surface to have some weight, they vanish on closer scrutiny, for they have no substance. I therefore conclude that usury must be judged, not by any particular passage of Scripture, but simply by the rules of equity.

After an illustration showing that borrowing money to buy a farm and paying interest to the lender who holds a mortgage is no worse than renting a farm and paying rent, Calvin proceeds to lay down some exceptions to the permission to lend or borrow money at interest. (1) One must take no interest when lending to the poor. (2) One must not neglect charity in order to have money to lend. (3) Nothing should take place which is not in accord with the Golden Rule. (4) The borrower should make at least as much on the money as the lender. (5) We must not measure our practices by what is licit par l'iniquité du monde, but by the Word of God. (6) What is good for the public takes precedence over our private benefit. (7) A repetition of No. 5, that what is

legal in an area may be unChristian and prohibited to the Christian.

In his Commentaries published later Calvin examined in turn Exodus 22:25, Leviticus 25:35-38 and Deuteronomy 23: 19-20.[127] Throughout his discussion the rule of charity is underscored, his interpretation of the law as politique (because of the permission to lend to foreigners) is clarified, la subtilite d'Aristote (ratio Aristotelis) is shattered, and biblical literalism is condemned. Here as in his Commentary on Psalm 15 and later (his last publication) on Ezekiel 18, Calvin was as sharp in his denunciation of the one who makes his business money-lending as Luther. It's hard to find a usurer who is not also "rapacious and lewd", he wrote, and lamented that the usurer hurt the poor rather than the rich.

In the Ezekiel Commentary he made his last contribution to the discussion when he condemned usury as a profession.

> First of all, in a well regulated republic, no usurer (foenerator) is tolerated: even the profane see this: whoever therefore professedly is a usurer, he ought to be expelled from intercourse with his fellow-men.[128]

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[127] Opera, 24, 6791.

[128] Opera, 40, 431. Praelectiones in Ezechielis, Ezekiel 18:5-9.

Calvin's contribution, then, does not lie in his hatred for the profession of money-lender, nor in his belief that usury is here to stay, and must therefore be allowed. These were common property in the 16th century. Rather, it is his willingness to wrestle with the Word as well as the world apart from scholastic analysis that distinguishes his writing on the subject. He saw too clearly that neither Old Testament legalism nor Aristotelian axioms covered the real world in which he lived. There was a specie of profit-making on money that was neither base nor rapacious. Late medieval commerce had operated on this assumption for a good many generations, but Calvin was the first to see the positive side in the light of theology.

This does not mean that Calvin was a modern man. We shall see in Chapter Four that his repugnance overcame his appreciation for the some-time beneficent practice, and the stringent rules he helped write caused some trouble in the Genevan market place.

6. Conclusion

So we finish this overview of Calvin's social and economic thought. He was not a legalist in any Roman or biblical sense, but regarded the rule of charity as the Christian norm, and human laws as attempts to regulate with some measure of justice sinful men in their social existence.

In our next chapter, by looking at Calvin's two-sided fight--for his state, and against it for the church--we intend to gain some understanding of how far Calvin would go in attempting to make this Christian norm the standard of the world.

CHAPTER II

CALVIN'S GENEVA: TWO STRUGGLES FOR FREEDOM

Our first chapter has been devoted to the economic and social views of the Genevan Reformer. Now we must examine the Sitz im Leben--Geneva during Calvin's life there as chief pastor. We must do this for two reasons: first, to provide an historical and political framework upon which to hang the various social and economic factors which will provide the meat for our study in Chapters III and IV; next, to see how intent Calvin was on making the Gospel, as he interpreted it, penetrate the mundane lives of men. These in turn will provide some basis for evaluating the permeation of Calvin's views.

Geneva's history from about 1525 to 1555 was dominated by two struggles for independence. The first was that of the city for freedom from Savoyard control; the second was the church under the leadership of Calvin seeking to win its freedom from the newly emancipated city councils of Geneva. At first the Reformation was an adjunct to political independence; but eventually the Church sought to establish

its own legitimate function, free from the State, and equal in relation to it. We shall watch both struggles unfold.

Geneva during the Middle Ages was an episcopal village really under the control of the Duke of Savoy, who appointed a vidomne (deputy) for the Bishop of Geneva. Duke Charles III began his rule in 1504, and from the beginning his demands were onerous to many in his vassal city. The Bishop of Geneva was a relative to Charles who appointed as his vicar-general at Geneva his cousin Jean, bastard son of a former bishop.[1] This Jean himself became bishop in 1513 at the behest of Charles, who appealed to the Pope to set aside the bishop elected by the ecclesiastical Chapter in Geneva.[2] Opposition to this sort of bastard-nepotism helped catalyze the indignation of the citoyens, some of whom left the city and became bourgeois at Fribourg, among them Besançon Hugues and Philibert Berthelier. These two became leading Eidgenossen, the name given to the Swiss Confederation, and by extension to those who wanted Geneva to ally with the Swiss in order to have some defense against the House of Savoy.[3] Bishop Jean aroused opposition by treating criminal cases as his jurisdiction (they belonged to the Small Council) con-

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[1] Histoire de Genève des Origines à 1798 (Geneva: La Société d'Histoire et d'Archeologie de Geneve, 1951), p. 172.

[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., p. 173.

trary to the city's Franchises; and then tried to cede all his temporal rights to the duke, a move approved by Pope Leo X, but thwarted by the College of Cardinals.

Opposition grew and finally Berthelier arranged for a combourgeoisie with Fribourg. Quickly the city leaders chose up sides, either that of the Eidgenossen (in French, Eidgenots), or the side of those the latter derisively called Mammelus, referring to the Mamelukes, slaves to the Sultan and converts to Islam.[4] The alliance was made early in 1519 and immediately opposed by Charles, who entered the city with 1000 troops in April of that year. Despite threatening sounds from Fribourg the bishop quickly stepped into his obstreperous city and had the chief of the Eidgenots, Berthelier, decapitated in August.[5]

Several years later Jean de Savoy died and the duke named Pierre de la Baume to be the new Bishop of Geneva. But it was soon evident that he was bishop only with the sufferance of Charles. The duke's vidomne declared that jurisdiction formerly belonging to the bishop was now his. This included coinage and the important and lucrative adjudication of civil cases in court. Opposition was aroused, but an episcopal judge who led the revolt was immediately

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[4] Ibid., p. 175. [5] Ibid., p. 176.

seized, arrested, taken to another town, tortured and executed.[6] Now citizens were angry not only at Savoy for usurping privileges for his own gain, but also at the bishop for not defending his rights and the Franchises of the city.

At this point there entered into the struggle the powerful city of Berne, which for the next fifty years will be both protector of the city and itself a threat to Geneva's independence. Formerly Berne had opposed any combourgeoisie between Geneva and the Swiss Confederation, but now changed its mind when it became evident that Charles of Savoy was no longer in the camp of Francis I of France, but that of his relative, the more dangerous Emperor Charles V. So the larger political scene gave the small unprotected city the powerful protector it needed against the might of Savoy. In the Fall of 1524, fresh incidents exacerbated already uneasy relations between the city and the duke, which resulted in his entering the city in December of 1525 and forcing the General Council's approval of continuing the control exercised by bishop and duke. But as soon as he left the city, sons and relatives of absent Eidgenots gathered, demanded the Council reverse its decision and immediately began to press for a new combourgeoisie. The bishop chose this time to re-enter

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[6] Ibid., p. 177.

the city, after an absence of ten years, and was presented with the plan, but had nowhere to turn for help. Neither citizens nor Savoy really cared for his prerogatives.[7] Berne reacted quickly and on 8 February 1526, Berne's Council received the Genevans as confederates. The bishop vetoed this combourgeoisie the next day, and the citizens, in order to by-pass the pro-episcopal Small Council, called the first meeting of a new Council, the Two Hundred. This "court packing" scheme resulted in overwhelming approval of a plea by Hugues to enter into the agreement with Berne, and on 25 February approval was given. Fifty Mamelukes left the city, with the bishop at their heels.[8]

The combourgeoisie with Berne was both the occasion of the duke's anger and the defense against his wrath. It said, in effect, that in case of attack on Geneva Berne and Fribourg would come to the city's aid, the expenses to be born by Geneva.[9] The good faith of those cities was soon put to the test. In 1527 the Duke's troops advanced on the city to retaliate for the disappearance of some arms. The Two Hundred declared in the face of this show of strength--and to unify a city not quite sure where the power really lay--that anyone who appealed to another tribunal than the

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[7] Ibid., p. 180. [8] Ibid., p. 182.

Syndics (four civic officials, elected annually) and the Council would be considered no longer part of the city. This meant that the Duke's power as vidomne for the bishop was gone, and clearly meant that the Council recognized neither bishop nor duke as its sovereign. This declaration of independence took place 28 September 1528.[10] Already a capital sentence had been leveled at the Mamelukes (fortunately absent) and their property confiscated by the city government.[11]

Afraid to counter with force because of the treaty with Berne and Fribourg, Duke Charles did nothing openly. But his vassals in the Pays de Vaud, nobles who united under the sign of the spoon (Gentilshommes de la Cuiller), conducted a bandit warfare against the commerce of the beleaguered city which amounted to a virtual blockade till 1530.

This intolerable situation was not relieved completely till 1536. But the story is quickly told. The duke mobilized an army in 1530, but failed to attack when Geneva's two supporters raised 12,000 men and forced a treaty upon him. The Treaty of Saint-Julien, 19 October 1530, stipulated that an attack upon Geneva by the duke would call down the arms of Berne and Fribourg and place the Pays de Vaud in the

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[10]Henri Naef, "L'Emancipation politique et la Réforme," Histoire de Geneve des Origines à 1798 (Geneva: La Societé d'Histoire et d'Archeologie de Geneve, 1951), p. 189.

[11]Ibid., p. 187.

hands of Berne. But if Geneva attacked the duke, it would be punished by its allies. Further arbitration that year re-instated the Duke in his vidomnat, but fined him 7000 écus to be paid to the three cities.[12] The negotiations went for naught. The duke paid no indemnity; the Genevans therefore would not accept him back as the bishop's representative.

With both bishop and his temporal arm out of the way, the religious reform which had already swept into Zurich and Berne, crept into Geneva. In 1527 the bishop had left and many of his canons and lesser ecclesiastics left with him. Berne became Protestant in 1528, through the efforts of Berthold Haller.[13] Protestantism did not come at once, nor unhindered to Geneva--it was brought in by merchants from Nuremberg, soldiers of Berne with their pastor Megander, the arrival by 1532 of men like Guillaume Farel, Pierre Olivier (called Olivétan, a relative of Calvin), and Antoine Saunier. Antoine Froment was the first to preach and lecture on the new faith with any continuity, beginning late that year, and his attacks on the clergy caused the Council to interdict unauthorized preaching.[14] 10 April 1533, the Cène was cele-

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[12] Ibid., p. 192. [13] Ibid., p. 194.

[14] Ibid., p. 196. His own account: Antoine Froment, Actes et Gestes de la Cité de Geneve, ed. Gustave Revilliod (Geneva: J. G. Fick, 1854), p. 12 f. Froment, like Roset, was refused publication of his Actes by Council in 1551.

brated for the first time by one Guérin Muète, with forty-five communicants. Finally the bishop returned in July of that year, and stayed but a few days. He never returned.[15]

During this period, Geneva lost one of its valuable allies. Fribourg did not go over to the side of Reform despite its proximity to powerful Berne, and when open Protestant preaching was tolerated early in 1534, Fribourg broke the combourgeoisie.

Gradually it became apparent that reform in religion and the fight for independence were linked. The bishop was tied to Savoy, Geneva to Berne. 1 October 1534, the Council voted that the episcopal see must be considered vacant.[16] But the bishop had already officially transferred his see to Gex, though Mass continued to be said in the turbulent city. The elections of 1535 were favorable for those wanting the reform to be made official, and Farel debated a chaplain named Jean Gacy, and perhaps a Dominican, Jean Chappuy, throughout most of the month of June.[17] The outflow of ecclesiastics continued--the nuns at the ancient convent of Saint Clair departed in August. Money from ecclesiastical

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[15] Ibid., p. 197.

[16] Herbert D. Foster, "Geneva before Calvin," Collected Papers of Herbert D. Foster (1929), p. 7.

[17] Naef, p. 202.

goods and properties went to endow the hospital, and the bishop's residence became the prison. On 10 August, the saying of mass was prohibited.[18] Still the city was not officially Protestant.

It took the fall of the House of Savoy to make the new religion official in Geneva. The forces of the bishop and Savoy were ravishing the countryside. The city was in desperate straits, the citizens hardly daring to leave the protection of the city walls. Berne refused to help, wanting to avoid outright war with Charles for fear that might bring down the armies of the Emperor. Some Genevan troops led by a French military leader named Vérey skirmished with the enemy outside the walls and won several small battles. But Berne, finally exasperated when the Duke would not agree to an armistice and fearful that Francis I would invade Savoyard territory before it could, raised an army of 6000 in January 1536. Within a few days this army ended all resistance in the Pays de Vaud and Pays de Gex, unblocked the roads to Geneva, and arrived at the city within a week. The small war continued for about two months with Bernese troops taking forts and towns, and by the end of March had taken Chillon, freeing Bonivard, the famous "Prisoner of Chillon," after an

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[18] Ibid., p. 204. From now on anyone going to L'Evêché was going to jail!

imprisonment of six years, and finished Savoyard control by capturing Lausanne. Duke Charles had committed the blunder of entering into a treaty with Charles V against France, so Savoy proper was invaded by Francis I, who asserted his right to the Dukedom because of his mother. The final treaty reduced the unhappy Charles to a fraction of his former power.[19] It would be a generation before Savoy would frighten the city watch at Geneva again.

The next step was official recognition of the Protestant victory. Farel exhorted the people to live selon Dieu. On 19 May the Small Council and the Two Hundred swore to do so, and 21 May 1536, the General Council voted unanimously "to live according to the Gospel and the Word of God.

> According to the resolution of the Ordinary [i.e. Small] Council, the General Council was assembled at the sound of the bell and the trumpet as is customary, and in front of the first syndic Claude Savoye the edict of the Ordinary Council and the Council of Two Hundred was proposed concerning the mode of life; and then in a loud voice the inquiry is made that if anyone knows and wishes to say something against the word and the doctrine which has been preached to us in this city, that he say it; and if all do not wish to live according to the Gospel and the Word of God, as since the abolition of Masses has been and is preached to us every day, without ever again aiming at or wishing Masses, images, idols nor other papal abuses of whatever kind. Consequently, with unanimous voice it is generally ordered, concluded, promised and sworn to God by the elevation of hands into the air

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[19] Ibid., p. 207. Also Harold J. Grimm, The Reformation Era (New York: Macmillan, 1954), p. 22,23.

> that all, unanimously, with the help of God, wish to live in this holy evangelical law and Word of God, as it has been announced to us, wishing [also] to give up all Masses and other papal ceremonies and abuses, images, idols and all that this may involve, to live in union and obedience of justice.[20,21]

Although the city was now free from both bishop and duke, its freedom had been won by Berne's soldiers, and the

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[20] Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia, ed. Guillaume Baum, Eduard Cunitz and Eduard Reuss (59 volumes; Brunschwick: 1863-1900), vol. 21, p. 201f. It should be noted that Volume 21 contains the "Annales Calviniani." These annals are taken from many sources, but the prime source is the voluminous, and as yet unpublished, Registres du Conseil. These will be referred to by the abbreviation R.C., followed by volume, and folio number.

[21] Opera, 21, 201. "iouxte la resolution de conseil ordinaire est este assemble le general au son de la cloche et a la trompete ainsi que est de coustume et par la voye de M. Claude Savoye premier sindicque est propose l'arrest du conseil ordinaire et de deux centz touchant le mode de vivre et apres ce aulte voix est este demande sil y avoit aucungs que sceusse et volusse dire quelque chose contre la parole et la doctrine qui nous est en ceste cite preschee quil le dyent et a scavoir si trestous veulent pas vivre selon levangille et la parole de Dieu ainsy que dempuis labolition des messes nous est este preschee et se presche tous les jours, sans plus aspirer ny vouloir messes ymaiges ydoles ny aultres abusions papalles quelles quelle soyent. Surquoy sans point daultre voix que une mesme est este generalement arreste et par elevation des mains en lair conclud et a Dieu promys et iure que trestous unanimement a layde de Dieu volons vivre en ceste sainct loy evangellicque et parolle de Dieu ainsyn queele nous este annoncee veuillans delaisser toutes messes et aultres ceremonies et abusions papales ymaiges et ydoles et tout ce que cela porroit toucher, vivre en union et obeissance de iustice. R.C., Vol. 29, fol. 112. 21 May 1536.

larger city wanted to take over the powers once exercised by both. The Council refused Berne's overtures in this regard and began to negotiate, finally reaching a settlement in August. The alliance between the two cities was renewed, Geneva agreed to pay the war debts, and further agreed to contract no other alliances without the permission of Berne. On its part, the stronger city gave up its pretensions to the vidomnate of Geneva. The city had its freedom, but was in some ways an inferior state.[22] At this same time the hommage of the rather small rural population about the city was obtained, an hommage once given to the bishop or some prior or chapter. There were about thirty small towns involved, and the total population a generation later has been estimated at a mere two thousand inhabitants.[23]

Before the treaty with Berne was completed, Geneva had been honored in July with the first visit by young Jean

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[22]Naef, p. 210, 211. Civil cases, which had been tried by the vidomne, were now tried before a Lieutenant, elected annually in November, plus four auditors, two elected each year. The Lieutenant also took a hand in criminal cases which were tried before the Small Council; he interrogated prisoners and executed the sentences passed by Council. The prosecuting attorney was called "Procureur-general," and was elected for a three year term. Appeal from judgments made by either the civil court or the Council sitting on criminal cases could be made to a Court of Final Appellation, composed of twelve judges drawn from the Small Council, the Sixty and the Two Hundred, or sometimes to the Council of Two Hundred itself. See E. William Monter, Studies in Genevan Government: 1536-1605 (Geneva: Droz, 1964), p. 61-65.

[23]Foster, p. 15.

Cauvin, running for his life from his native France. We need not dwell here on his dislike of Guillaume Farel's plan that he stay in the newly emancipated city; nor on Farel's threat of the wrath of God if he refused. It is sufficient to note that after a short business trip to Basel, Calvin returned about the middle of August and began to teach. The Registres du Counseil first take notice of him on 5 September, where his importance is not sufficient to give him a name, but only "that Frenchmen."[24]

From the very beginning there was a great deal of hesitancy on the part of the city government to see the church in the same light as did Calvin. Previous to the action to live "according to God," a moral code had already been adopted by the Council. On 28 February, the code was adopted, prohibiting blasphemy, playing at cards or dice, giving protection to thieves, adulterers and vagabonds; it contained a note against selling bread and wine at unreasonable prices and forbade the unauthorized holding of taverns. (However, there was little new in this code in the area of personal morality.) Attendance at sermon was also enforced and private baptism proscribed.[25] The Protestant state was

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[24]Opera, 21, 204. R.C., Vol. 29, fol. 51. 5 September 1536. "Mag. Guil. Farellus exponit sicuti sit necessaria illa lectura qualem initiavit ille Gallus in S. Petro."

[25]Foster, p. 26.

evidently intent on taking over the supervision exercised by church, state and guild in the Middle Ages. But Calvin and Farel were not satisfied with this beginning. In November Farel presented to the Council of Two Hundred articles concerning the government of the church (articuli de regimine Ecclesiae). The 18th of January the Reformers renewed their demand, calling for a wide and deep Reformation of church and people in Geneva. Included in their memorial was monthly celebration of the Supper, the necessity of excommunication (though who pronounced excommunication is not clear), surveillance by the government over morals, the need for a Confession of Faith, clearer laws concerning marriage, and catechizing of the young.[26] Amédée Roget, the most complete chronicler of these times, says that there was nothing here not common to other Swiss Protestant Churches save for the bare outline of the Consistory, which will be filled out in the Ordonnances of 1541.[27]

The Council and the Two Hundred approved of the pastors' memorial, except they reduced the Supper from once a

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[26]Amedee Roget, Histoire du Peuple de Geneve (7 vols; Geneva: Jullien, 1870-1883) I, p. 15-20.

[27]The modern Calvinist, who strains his Calvinism through English Puritanism, is surprised at the degree of laxity allowed in Sunday observance. Shops were to be closed Sunday "as soon as the great bell sounded the last stroke," and bakers were not allowed to "cry their pasties on Sunday during the sermon." Perhaps it is note-worthy that the Genevans never called dimanche le Sabbat.

month to once per quarter. But when the time came for the citizens of the city to swear to the Confession of Faith (written by Farel), the fat was in the fire, and the ensuing struggle would sweep both men from their posts in Geneva. As one leafs through the pages of the "Annales" one sees many references to the failure of the citizens to subscribe.[28] Early in 1538 the pastors demanded that those who would not subscribe should be excommunicated.[29] There were many unhappy over the idea of free citizens of a free city being forced to sign a declaration of faith written by two foreign theologians. Foremost among the malcontents were Jean Phillippe and Jean Lullin. From the very first Berne seems to have exercised considerable influence on these men, and through them on the ticklish relationship between church and state in Geneva. Roget thinks that both politically and religiously Berne thought of itself as emancipator of Geneva,

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[28] Opera, 21, 213, 216, 217, 218. 29 July 1537, 30 October, 12 November, 15 November, 26 November, 14 December.

[29] Opera, 21, 219. "Les predicants Farel Calvinus et Corauld sont venus expose que en la cene ordonnee de dieu ne doibvent enten gens dissonens a lunion des fidelles ny semans division: pourquoy puys que dimenche prochain est arreste celebre la senne il ne sont de advys il recepvoir ceulx quil scaivent estre desunys et pourtant demandent ladvis de Messieurs." R.C., Vol. 31, fol. 146. 3 January 1538. Note here one of the problems of the translator, when the word for the Lord's Supper, Cène, can be spelled cene and senne in the same sentence by the same secretary! There are about ten variations on the word in these early records.

and was unhappy about the complete freedom evidenced by the church under Calvin and Farel.[30] Whatever the influence, the Council of Two Hundred did not go along with the preachers, deciding not to refuse the Supper (here, sene) to anyone.

The election of syndics which took place annually on the first Sunday of February witnessed to the complete displeasure of the citoyens with the disciplinary measures of the pastors. Although three of the four elected, Jean Phillippe, Jean Lullin and Ami de Chapeaurouge, had been supporters of Farel when he first came to the city in 1532, they were equally opposed to Calvin's demand that the citizenry subscribe to the Confession.[31] If one can believe the Registres, the preachers immediately begin to mix politics with religion. 12 March, Calvin was called on the carpet for holding "the Council to be a Council of the Devil." And in the same sitting "M. G. Farel and M. Calvinus are not to mix themselves in magistrat."[32] And at the same time the Council

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[30]Roget, I, p. 58. [31]Ibid., p. 69, 70.

[32]Opera, 21, p. 222. "...et denvoyer querre Calvinus tochant de certaines parolles quil az dist ab sermon, que le conseyl lequel lon alloyt tenyr estoyt conseyl du diable.. ..Lon az deffenduz az Me G. Farel et Me Calvinus de point se mesler du magistrat." R.C., Vol. 32, fol. 4. Roget adds, also from the place cited, "...but that they preach the Gospel as God has commanded them." Roget I, 80. It sounds remarkably modern!

decided to send both to an ecclesiastical council to be held at Lausanne the last day of March, at the request of the city Council of Berne.

This council and its decisions were fateful for the reformers of Geneva. Berne simply wanted some uniformity in worship in its territories and invited Geneva to share in that uniformity, or rather, assumed that they would do so. While the measures taken were not in themselves important, neither Calvin nor Farel seems to have had any voice in the proceedings, and it is not to be wondered that these fiery defenders of the freedom of the church should prove recalcitrant when the Council at Geneva decided that the measures taken would be enforced in Geneva whether the pastors liked it or not. What were these measures? The use of the baptistère or font when baptizing, unleavened bread in the Supper, and observance of the four festivals established by Berne as those to be observed in her territories, namely Christmas, Easter, Ascension Day and Pentecost.[33] Calvin, Farel and Corault, the blind preacher, asked for a little more time to study the matter, since the Council wished them to observe the Supper at Easter using the Bernese rite, with Easter only two days away. No time was allowed, and when all

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[33]Roget, I, p. 84 and 85.

three refused to accede to the request, Corault was put in prison and Calvin and Farel prohibited from preaching Easter Sunday if they would not celebrate the supper in the manner prescribed. They did refuse to celebrate and they did preach, explaining that they did not consider the use of unleavened bread wrong, but that to administer the sacrament under prevailing conditions would be to profane it.[34] The Small Council met in special session that same afternoon, the Two Hundred the next day, the General Council the day after that. All were in agreement:

> It has also been proposed concerning Farel and Calvin and the other preacher [Corault], who did not wish to obey the command of the magistracy, to see if they should be granted permission to leave or not, as the small and large [200] Council(s) have resolved. By acclamation it is ordered that they shall leave the city within the next three days.[35]

So they left, Calvin for Strassbourg, Farel for Neuchatel. At a Synod which convened shortly at Zurich, Calvin

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[34] Roget, I, p. 86-94, taken directly from the Registres du Conseil, gives the clearest account of the circumstances leading up to the exile of Farel and Calvin.

[35] Opera, XXI, p. 226. After acknowledging agreement with the smaller councils concerning the worship ceremonies agreed on at Lausanne, the record of the General Council continues: "Az este propose aussy touchant de Farel et Calvinus et aultre predicant que non point volsu obeyr aut commandement du magistral et voyr si lon leur donneraz congie ab non, comment le petit et grand conseyl az ainsy resoluz. Laz plus grand voys az arreste quil doyjent vuyder laz ville dans troys jours prochaien." R.C., Vol. 32, fol. 35, 23 April 1538.

maintained that none of the items over which he and the Council quarreled was important, but the freedom of the church was. It is interesting to note that the two marks of the true church for Calvin, the preaching of the Word and the right administration of the sacraments, were precisely the two points at issue here.[36]

We shall not concern ourselves with Calvin at Strassbourg, with his pastorate there of French refugees, nor his marriage to the widow Idelette de Bure. The Genevan scene during his three-years leave is also quickly described. Trouble arose between the city and Berne over several territories coveted by both powers, formerly giving hommage not to the bishop (most of these, except for Geneva proper, were all in the hands of Berne) but to two Genevan ecclesiastical institutions, the priory of St. Victor and the Chapter. Each jurisdiction included several villages and the treaty in 1536 gave the rents and revenues to Geneva but juridical powers to Berne. After much bickering over such an unfair adjudication of territories so close at hand the Council deputized three ambassadors to conclude a favorable treaty, Jean Lullin, Ami de Chapeaurouge and J. G. Monathon. On 30 March,

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[36] Institutes, IV, I, ix. "Hence the visible Church rises conspicuous to our view. For wherever we find the word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, there, it is not to be doubted, is a Church of God."

the treaty had been signed by the three, and the results, from the Genevan point of view, were disastrous--Geneva retained its rents and tithes, but Berne its sovereignty, a sovereignty which meant simply that Geneva was reduced to being a city with almost no rural areas so vital to the feeding of the inhabitants. Roget believes that the treaty was not so disastrous to Geneva as some have supposed, but neither was it favorable. Two months went by before the Council even asked the terms--strange way of running a government! But when the bailiff of Ternier, a town under Bernese control, arrested and tortured a subject of St. Victor, and the Genevan authorities protested, he replied that the terms of the agreement authorized his action. A storm broke around the heads of the unhappy embassy. Finally the Bernese sent a copy translated into French and the Council "recognized to its great surprise that its ambassadors had renounced in its name the prerogatives they had been charged to maintain."[37] Unanimously the Council decided not to accept the treaty on 27 June 1539, and the deputies were ordered to go back to Berne and fix it up. Berne of course refused, the anger of the citizenry waxed hotter and hotter, and by January of the next year the three "Articulants" or "Artichauds" (so-called

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[37]Roget, I, p. 189. Most of the information I have gleaned from Roget, I, pages 171-189.

for the articles they signed, though why this would turn into artichokes is a bit obscure) were in jail. After being released they vanished from the city and their places were taken by members of an opposing party which had grown out of this conflict, and on 5 June 1540, a sentence of death was pronounced against the unsuccessful treaty-makers who, since they were out of the city, lived to enjoy the amnesty that was granted them four years later.[38] In this, as with the supporters of the duke and bishop previously, and the followers of Ami Perrin in 1555, we find that civic passions led to unmerciful treatment for the losers.

Since the party in disfavor had been the party whose election swept Calvin out of Geneva, these events scarcely a year after his departure prepared the way for his return. But it was more than a year before the pleas of the Council were answered by the exile's second advent. We read of that concern 21 September 1540, and again 13 October, 20 October and 22 October.

> So that the honor and glory of God be advanced, be it resolved that every means possible be investigated in order to have M. Calvin as preacher.[39]

Calvin's dislike for returning to Geneva is well-

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[38] Ibid., p. 225-229.

[39] This particular reference may be found in Opera, 21, 267. R.C., Vol. 34, fol. 483. 19 October 1540.

known. It was only the entreaty of Pierre Viret, who returned for a while in January of 1541, of Farel and the pastors at Zurich, as well as the revocation of the edict of banishment and the obvious desire of the Genevan Council to have him return, that melted his resolve.[40]

Calvin returned to take up his life's work again on 13 September 1541. At the Council meeting that day a committee was set up to confer with him and the other preachers to set up Ordonnances for the Church and the Consistory, the latter that small body of pastors and laymen which served as the disciplinary arm of the Church, and which will be the center of so much trouble for the next fourteen years.[41]

The renewal of the combourgeoisie with Berne, broken by the argument over the territories of St. Victor and the Chapter, the expulsion of the Articulants and the death and

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[40] In October of 1540 he had written to Farel: "Every time I recall to memory the miserable hours that I have spent in Geneva I shudder from head to foot at the idea of returning there." Cited by Roget, I, p. 294,5. I cannot find this quotation in Opera, 15, where the 1540 correspondence is collected.

[41] Opera, 21, 282. "Quant aux ordonnances sus leglise et consistoyre az este resoluz que lon doybje suyvre apres icelles fere. Et hont estes eslieuz pour havoyer conference avecque les dits predicans assavoyer les Srs. Claude Pertemps, Amyez Perrin, Claude Roset, Iohan Lambert et du grand conseyl M. le lieutenant Goulaz et Porralis. Et...aut lieu de M. le lieutenant soyt mys le S^r Iohan Balard." R.C., Vol. 35, fol. 324. It is ironic that Ami Perrin was a member of the committee to set up the Ordinances that will eventually be the cause of his hasty departure from Geneva in 1555.

exile of several of their supporters, was close to the heart of the Geneva Council. It could not get along with Berne, which seemed to feel it had the right to some sort of control over its smaller neighbor to the west, but neither could it afford to live without the protection of the eastern bear. During the next few years Calvin was appointed to several committees whose duty was to iron out these differences, and time and again his patience was sorely tried, both by the arrogance of Berne's Council, and the pettiness of the Genevans. Roget's remarks on Calvin's part in the negotiations is illuminating:

> This complicated negotiating throws an instructive light on the kind of intervention exercised by Calvin in the affairs of the republic. One sees that if by his counsels he exercised an incontestable influence, he is a long way from dictating his will to the magistrates.[42]

Finally on 29 January 1544, the agreement was signed. Geneva gained the control over these territories that she needed. But Berne was successful in obtaining the amnesty of the Articulants and their right to their property.

From now on the question most germane to our study is the one pertaining to the freedom of the church. The Ordinances had been in effect scarcely eighteen months when

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[42]Roget, II, p. 109.

the Council of Sixty[43] ruled that the Consistory did not have the power to decide who could not receive the Supper.

> Resolved that the Consistory does not have any jurisdiction nor power to deny [the Supper], but only of admonishing, and then to make this known to the Council so that the Seigneurie may perceive to judge delinquents according to their demerit.[44]

This arbitrary control over church discipline by the civil government ought not to have caught any pastor by surprise. Indeed, Calvin had barely returned and his ordinances studied and passed with some emendation by the Small Council, when the request of the pastors to see what changes had taken place was denied.[45] Such a denial could not help but be a warning that the Council intended to run the church as a department of state.

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[43]After much study the Council of Sixty is still somewhat a puzzle. Formerly a powerful Council standing between the Small Council and the General Council, its authority seems to have given way to that of the Two Hundred after the revolt from episcopal and Savoyard rule, except in certain situations when it was convoked by the Small Council to act as a court or board of appeal.

[44]Opera, 21, 309. 19 March 1543. "Surquoy resoluz que le consistoire ne aye nulle iuridiction ny puyssance de deffendre synon seulement admonester et puys fere relation en conseil affin que la seigneurie advise de juger sus les delinquans selon leur demerite." R.C., Vol. 37, fol. 37.

[45]Opera, 21, 286. 2 November 1541. "Sur ce que les Srs. predicans desyrent voyer les reparacions sus les ordonnances de leglise: ordonne que az eulz nappartient les revoyer, et que laffere soyt mis aux deux cens abiourdhuy. R.C., Vol. 35, fol. 384.

If the prostration of the church was not proclaimed by the 1543 edict, it was certainly made manifest in 1545 when the Council tried to force the pastors to agree to its decision to install an ignorant ex-monk named Zeraphim Trolliet as pastor. The contest began in the spring when the Council appointed this native Genevan to "the first vacant place."[46] Calvin and the other pastors found him deficient and said so to the Council on 8 June, but on the 29th he was confirmed in his position though ordered to study. This did not satisfy the clergy, for Trolliet's appointment had to be re-confirmed 17 and 18 August.[47] However, Roget never lists him as an active pastor.

This struggle for freedom of the church is sometimes called the struggle between Calvinists and Perrinists, so-named from the leader of the opposition, Ami Perrin; sometimes Calvinists versus the Libertines. The former definition is to be preferred, since the Libertines against whom Calvin wrote and the Perrinists are not to be confused.[48]

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[46] Ibid., p. 349. 20 March 1545. R.C., Vol. 40, fol. 59.

[47] The Trolliet appointment was an attempt to get at least one native Genevan into the Geneva Company of Pastors. All the others were foreigners, mainly French refugees, with much better intellectual credentials. Cf. Opera, 21, 354, 6, and 359,360. R.C., Vol. 40, fols. 140, 165, and 216,217.

[48] Failure to distinguish them leads Georgia Harkness to identify Ami Perrin's followers with the amoralist panth-

By the time the election of new Syndics took place in February of 1547, the Consistory had already angered the captain-general Ami Perrin by bringing several of his wife's relatives before its bar and then sending them on to the Small Council for sentencing. That election resulted in three of four new Syndics elected being against Calvin and the election of three replacements to the Small Council who were all unenthusiastic about the role of the Consistory in policing Genevan morals. The issue of whether the Consistory could take to task those tried by the Council was raised by François Favre, father-in-law to Perrin, who had been sent to prison and then, after serving his term, remanded to the Consistory for a verbal altercation with pastor Abel Poupin. His family argued that the law assumed that trial before the Council was sufficient, and that he need not be sent back to the Consistory to be harangued. The Council took an equivocal position telling him to use the best means possible to

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eists against whom Calvin wrote in his tract, Contre la Secte des Libertins, Opera, 7, 153-248. The latter were a sect found in Germany and the Low Countries whom Calvin probably knew only through the Munsterites. Calvin never referred to Perrin and Company as Libertines. The incautious reader might suppose the "hog Quentin" who says that when a murderer kills it is God who kills, (p. 75 of her John Calvin, the Man and His Ethics), was among the Genevan magistrates mentioned on pp. 130 and 223!

reconcile himself with the ministers,[49] but also informing Poupin that he should be more careful of the words he used in the Consistory trials and "in his preaching not to belittle the princeps."[50] Good advice: for Poupin had called Favre a dog! Three days later the Council reprimanded the attitude of the members of the Consistory, who, we must remember, were made up of an equal number of laymen and pastors. It warned the Consistory that often the charges for which it sent people to the Council were not found true; that it should treat people more graciously; and, more to the point, that the city ordonnances did not oblige the Council to send delinquents back to the ecclesiastical body, but that the decision to remand persons for "good remonstrances" by the ministers was at the discretion of the Seigneurie.[51]

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[49] Opera, 21, 400. 21 March 1547. "Resoluz que par tous les mellieurs moyens qui sera possible lon advise de le reconsillier avecque les ministers.... R.C., Vol. 42, fol. 63.

[50] Ibid.

[51] The whole statement reads: "Pour ce qui a des assistans aux consistoyres que a tous propos accusent les gens et par telles accusations sont demandes aut conseil et souventeffois il ne ce trove veritable: parquoy a este ordonne de les advertyr qui nayent de ainsin proceder mes iouxte [selon] les esdictz cydevant passes doybgent suyvre, cest de admonester les deffailans gracieusement etc. Resolu que le conseil nest pas oblige par les edits de renvoyer les delinquans au consistoyre. Cela demeure a la discretion de la seigneurie." Opera, 21, 400, 1. 25 March 1547. R.C., Vol. 42, fol. 68.

Four days later, when Calvin appeared before the Council to claim that the Consistory must know the attitude of those sentenced (usually fined) in order to admit or deny them to the Cène, the Council declared that it would send back those who were rebellious and obstinate and those who were penitent would be allowed to go in peace.[52] Strangely enough, while asserting in principle that the Council had this right--which really meant the right to lift the Consistory's excommunication--in this concrete instance it did send back François Favre.

The Favre affair, which soon came to involve several other members of that family, notably his daughter Françoise Perrin (who escaped from sentence by riding furiously out of town and almost riding over visiting pastor Poupin in the process), extended till late in 1547. The Annales contain bits and pieces of the Council and Consistory records, and Roget covers it amply.[53] The upshot was that father, son and son-in-law Perrin all ended up in jail, along with one of Calvin's supporters, one Mègret "le magnifique" who de-

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[52]Ibid., 29 March. "Ayans entendu la proposite de M. Calvin ministre ordonne que quant aut renvoye que icelluy sera faict quant aux rebelles et obstines et cieulx que seront repentans lon les layrra en paex ce que ung chascun cest accorde." R.C., Vol. 42, fol. 70.

[53]Roget, Vol. III, p. 1-39.

nounced Perrin as a conspirator with the King of France against Geneva's liberties. (Mègret was probably the hostage often required in Genevan law when accusations were made.) By December the Two Hundred was in an uproar over the affair and Calvin's life was endangered when he appeared before that tumultuous body. Finally, everyone was freed, Calvin and Perrin were reconciled for the time being, and Mègret removed from the bourgeoisie.[54]

The next year was even worse with the unrest of the free-livers growing, and the acerbity of the preaching of men like Calvin, Cop, Poupin and Chauvet becoming more pronounced. In May, Calvin himself was called on the carpet by the Council:

> M. Calvin minister. The latter with great choler preached that the magistracy permits many insolences. Ordered that he should be called before the Council in order to know why he has so preached, and that if there is some insolence in the city, the lieutenant should be commanded to look into it and to do justice concerning it.[55]

Then Philibert Berthelier, wealthy and used to his

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[54]See Opera, 21, 413-420, which takes notice of some items in the squabble and mentions Perrin's re-entry into the Small Council on 15 January 1548.

[55]Ibid., p. 426. 21 May 1548. "M. Calvin ministre. Lequelt hier avecques grandes colleres prescha que le magistral permecstoyt plusieurs insolences. Ordonne qui soyt appelle en conseyl pour scavoyer de luy a quelle intencion a cella prescha et silya quelque insolence par la ville qui soyt commande aut Lieutenant dy vellier et den fere justice." R.C., Vol. 43, fol. 94.

own way, entered into the Council-Consistory squabble and stayed in the maelstrom till the end. He was brought there initially for breaking a marriage contract to one Jeanne Pignon because he discovered that her face was her fortune. He then "used great words against M. Calvin", speaking with words aspres et arrogantz, and "with great disdain made with his fingers the sign to the whole assembly of the Consistory."[56] Berthelier, whose father had been an early martyr to Savoy in the struggle for independence, became a leader, with his brother François, Pierre Vandel (now on the Small Council), and the Sept brothers in the anti-Calvinist wing led by Ami Perrin.

The Council, largely Perrinist it would seem, was able to get back at Calvin and the pastors by refusing to grant permission for Mègret "le magnifique" to marry the first cousin of his deceased wife, despite the pleas of the pastors, who could find nothing in Holy Scripture or the city's ordinances to forbid this. And then, to crown the opposition victory, some old letters of Calvin to Viret came into the hands of his enemies, evidently sold by Viret's secretary. These letters, written in 1545, carried some strong language against certain members of Council, for Calvin was repri-

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[56] Ibid., p. 432. 23 August 1548. Consistory record. 24 August, R.C., Vol. 43, fol. 174. We can only surmise what the sign was.

manded sorely for his intemperance. On 14 September he was advised to understand that "there are no tares in the church."[57] The bearer of the letters was the ex-monk Trolliet, who never attained the rank of pastor. Before this hassle was over Viret had come back to defend his friend, and was treated to dinner by the Council. Also Farel made his appearance, and was likewise rewarded. But to no avail. On 18 October, Calvin had to appear and respond article by article about what he had written.[58] Calvin was receiving what most fair observers would have to call a taste of his own medicine.

All the while that this struggle was going on, Calvin was plagued by the fairly obvious adulterous relationship between his brother Antoine's wife, Anne, and Jean Chautemps, son of a Calvinist Council member of the same name. Anne escaped this time when she and Chautemps agreed that while he had been in her bedroom of a night, she had repulsed his advances. The day after her release from prison on this charge, Chautemps was put out of the way for a time when his father swore out a warrant for his arrest because he was a

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[57] Ibid., p. 434. "...et adviser qui naye nulle sizanie en leglise." R.C., Vol. 43, fol. 194.

[58] Roget, III, p. 66,7. Also Opera, 21, 439-441.

vaccabun.[59] How the opponents of strict enforcement of a moral code must have chuckled to see Calvin's brother cuckolded in the house of Calvin; no wonder the latter complained on 14 December that some people were shortening his name to Cayn (Cain) and others calling their dogs "Calvin."[60]

Amity finally reigned between the two parties as the new year began, as ministers and Council rubbed elbows at dinner, the tax-payers picking up the tab. But according to Roget, Calvin wrote to Farel the day of the banquet, 6 January 1549: "These glossed-over reconciliations are like ointment on a wound; they don't heal at all."[61]

Although immigration from France had begun by 1542, the ranks were swelling so fast that by 1549 the Council ordered a book opened in which new habitants must have their names inscribed, swearing "to live according to the Holy Reformation and to be obedient and subject to us, and to observe our commandments and contributions throughout the time

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[59]This whole story can be read in Roget, III, 69,70, and Opera, 21, 439-441, Consistory Records for 27 September 1548 and 18 October, and R.C. for 5 October, 11 October and 16 October. Later Antoine divorced Anne when she was caught in the act with Calvin's own servant, Daguet.

[60]Opera, 21, 442. "Et aussi qui en a de ceulx que au lieu de luy appelle Calvin il luy appellent Cayn et aussi il en a de ceulx qui hont imposer a leurs chien Calvin que ne doibt estre permis." R.C., Vol. 43, 265 fol.

[61]Roget, III, 82. Opera, 21, 442,3. R.C., Vol. 43, fol. 267.

they may be habitants in our city."[62] Most of these French will prove to be on the side of Calvin, and their increasing numbers will frighten and anger many old bourgeoisie and habitants. So as the Calvinist-Perrinist schism continued, the issue was not solely the power of the Consistory, but increasingly came to be concerned with the growing influence of the refugees, particularly those who paid their way into the bourgeoisie, and thus had won the right to vote in the General Council.[63]

But the alarm at foreigners was not yet the main point of contention. Freedom of the church continued to be the sore spot. In 1549 the Council made it clear that worship was part of its jurisdiction, as well as excommunication. On 24 October, Calvin came to complain about the burden of daily preaching. From this we can infer that the Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday schedule of services at

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[62]Paul F. Geisendorf, Livre des Habitants de Genève, 1549-1560 (Geneva: Droz, 1957), p. ix. Geisendorf has listed in this book all the names of those who came from 1549 till the first book was closed in 1560. Later persecutions caused the book to be opened twice again, and these names Geisendorf has covered in a subsequent volume. Eight days after St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572 (i.e. 2 September), a new flood of Huguenots caused the first re-opening of The Book of Habitants.

[63]Alfred L. Covelle, Le Livre des Bourgeois (Geneva:J. Jullien, 1897) p. 227-235. A few natives were also received. In 1545 only eight were received, and in 1546 only nine, one of whom was Antoine Calvin.

the beginning of the Reformation in Geneva, had been replaced by daily services. The Council decided that it wanted daily services continued, but that the sermons should be shorter! Furthermore, four members of the Council were appointed to make sure these orders were carried out.[64]

Evidently going by the theory that he who pays the piper calls the tune, the Council had also decided to improve the liturgy of the Church, commanding the pastors to have the Lord's Prayer more often and "to say the commands of our Lord as it was in the beginning."[65] Calvin complained that these novelties only led to confusion and smacked of sorcerie et enchantement (to the confusion of the modern reader), and that he would rather die. The Council evidently took this threat with equanimity, ordering "that remonstrances be made to him."[66] Later Loys Bourgeois, the composer of many of the Genevan Psalm-tunes, was imprisoned by the Council for printing the songs differently, and had to be rescued from prison

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[64] Opera, 21, 457; 24 and 28 October 1549. "Arreste que les prescheurs doibgent prescher tous les mattin et qui ne tiengnyent pas tant comme il hont advertie." How long were the sermons? Once a thirty minute sermon is mentioned. R.C., Vol. 44, fol. 247.

[65] Ibid. It is unclear what was meant here. I incline to the belief that the Council wanted the decalogue split into the two tables in the congregational recitation; but there may be here an attempt to use the summary of the law reported in the Synoptic Gospels.

[66] Ibid.

by the intervention of Calvin.[67] Evidently the Council took Erastianism seriously, a generation before that Heidelberg worthy flourished.

The great test case--which was discontinued from time to time but never really disappeared till the Calvinist triumph--began with the same Philibert Berthelier who was brought before the Consistory in March of 1551 for absenting himself from worship, from the Supper and for over-familiarity with the widow of a former Council secretary, Ruffi. When asked if he intended to marry her, he told Calvin that "when he wanted to marry, he would not counsel with him!"[68] For several days Berthelier bounced back and forth between Council and Consistory, before the former questioned the competency of the latter to deny him the Supper. By April the exasperated Council decided to go to the sources--to examine the Ordonnances of 1541 and see what they said on the matter of excommunication.[69] As if Berthelier weren't enough, Phili-

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[67] Ibid., p. 494. 3 December 1551. R.C., Vol. 46, fol. 106. The Strassbourg editors call Bourgeois l'imprimeur, the Printer, but Jacques Bourgeois, the printer, is not known prior to 1556. Roget, III, 210, more correctly says, "chantre."

[68] Ibid., p. 476. Reg. du Consistoire. The affair is dealt with at some length by Roget, III, 144-151.

[69] Opera, 21, 479. 13 April 1551. "...quand a laffaire de la cene que lon voye les edictz et que lon sen souvienne den parler icy quand le conseyl sera plus amplement assemble." R.C., Vol. 44, fol. 249.

bert Bonna, a member of the Council and syndic the previous year, stormed out of a Consistory meeting, and returned wearing "un bouquet en son bonnet."[70] The latter was in and out of prison that summer for dancing, calling Calvin a "devil from France," and insulting the Consistory. The Sept brothers, Jean Baptiste and Balthasar, contributed their bit by complaining before the Council that Calvin had abused them for playing tennis near St. Pierre's one afternoon. Calvin explained that their noise sounded to him like a deliberate attempt to drown out the lesson, not the noise of tennis players.[71] So it went--irritation and counter irritation, as each side contested for elbow room; the one for freedom in morals, the other for freedom for church discipline.

With the election in February 1553, the situation grew desperate for the supporters of Calvin. The election was a decided victory for the Perrinists, with Ami himself elected the first syndic. This meant that this figure, continuing his position as captain-general of the militia, was director of the Council for the year, setting the agenda, calling the meetings, and appointing committees and responsibilities. (Calvin called him "our comic Caesar.") In ad-

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[70] Ibid., p. 474. He also complained that it was the Council's job to judge him, not the task of the Consistory.

[71] Ibid., p. 477. 25 March 1551. R.C., Vol. 44, fol. 233.

dition, a change in voting for the Small Council led to the election of four new counsellors, of whom three, Claude Vandel, Jean Baptiste Sept and Gaspard Favre (brother-in-law to Perrin), were favorable to the Perrinist side.[72] Calvin complained in a letter to Farel that,

> ...Such is the turmoil of the republic that the Church of God is tossed about here like the ark of Noah in the midst of the deluge; but the pious men are no more troubled than if they reposed in a peaceful cove.[73]

From now on we shall see a concerted attack on Calvin, the rights of the Consistory and the French refugees. Less obvious in his opposition to Calvin than the Berthelier brothers, Philibert and François, the Bonna brothers, Philibert and Pierre, or the Sept brothers, Balthasar and Jean Baptiste--Perrin was also smoother and more able than they, had been more to the fore as a leader of the militia and a sometime diplomat, and had once been a loyal supporter of Calvin. One suspects that he had supported Calvin because he saw the urgent necessity for a strong hand at the helm of a bishopless church; but the penalties inflicted for the peccadilloes of his in-laws, the Favre family, were enough to convince him that a strong hand can be too strong. It is also possible to sympathize with the position of many in Europe at

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[72] Roget, III, 277. [73] Ibid.

that day (indeed, the great majority of rulers of all types), that the church, being dependent on the government for financial support and defense, must also expect government control. Popes, such as the infamous Julius III, the "warrior pope," the Borgias and others of better reputation were quite aware of the difficulty of obtaining freedom for the church, and used every method, alliance, or scheme at their command to insure some measure of autonomy.

The first shot was a renewal of the earlier decision to check into the original ordinances to see what the power of the Consistory was in the prohibition of the Supper.[74] Then the Council decided to deny the pastors the right to attend meetings of the General Council despite the fact that all except Calvin were bourgeoisie, i.e. had purchased or been granted the right to vote. The Council pointed out that prior to the Reformation the priests had exercised no such franchise, to which Calvin responded that unlike the priests the pastors did not wish to be exempt from temporal judicatories.[75] He lost, though the response of the Council made

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[74] Ibid., p. 536. 27 February 1553. R.C., Vol. 47, fol. 28.

[75] Ibid., 536,7,8. Roget, III, 280. Michel Roset, Chroniques de Geneve, ed. Henry Fazy (Geneva: Georg, 1894), p. 350. Roset's Chroniques were finished in 1562, but existed in manuscript form till Fazy's rather "antique" editorial job in 1894. Next to the Registres du Conseil, Registre du

it appear that the pastors were being excused from an onerous duty.[76] Next the conduct of the Consistory in its examination of malfactors was questioned, there being many complaints that proper order was not maintained, nor were people examined in a kindly way as the edicts stipulated.[77]

But the strongest blow was aimed at the French refugees, who were suspect both for being foreigners (estrangiers) and being dangerous to the Perrinists because of their admiration for Calvin. On 11 April, a decision was made pertaining to them which severely limited their activities. First, they were to be visited by two syndics, four counsellors and some of the militia. Then they were warned not to take up quarters without advising the captain of the quarter, nor to entertain guests without permission from the captain. They

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Consistoire and Register of the Venerable Company of Pastors, it is the most valuable first-hand account of the period. Only the Register of the Pastors has been translated (cf. Bibliography). We speak of the remarkable Roset at some length in Chapter III.

[76] Ibid., 538. 16 March 1553. "Si les ministres iouxte la bourgeoisie doivent aller en conseil general. Arreste: pendant quilz seront en office il seront excuse et exempts de venir: quand il seront hors loffice eulx et apres eulx leurs enfans y pourront venir." R.C., Vol. 47, fol. 37.

[77] Ibid., p. 539. 10 April. "Pour ce que plusieurs se sont plaint de ce que a tous propos les ministres et les Sgrs. du consistoire font convenir devant le consistoire sans observer lordre ny moing les admonetter familierement comment estoit de coustume et suyvant les editz." R.C., Vol. 47, fol. 52.

had to check their arms with the captain, except for swords, which they had to leave in their houses. And, finally, they were not to take part in the watch (a duty of all habitants of the city), but were to pay their share in maintaining that watch.[78]

Finally the Perrinists were victorious; Calvin handed in his resignation. Either the pressure had gotten too much, or Calvin was playing his last card, banking on the Council's hesitation to lose the hand that guided the church, even if it guided too strongly. He lost in either case: his resignation was not accepted, and the situation which brought it up--the Council's arbitrary decision over the request of the Company of Pastors to send Nicholas des Gallars to the village of Jussy and to bring the less able Bourgoing to the city--also was decided by the Council in the Council's own favor.[79]

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[78] Emile Rivoire and Victor van Berchen, Les Sources du Droit du Canton de Genève (3 Vols; Arau: H. R. Sauerlander, 1930), III, no. 903. A month later it was solemnly decided that foreigners could leave their houses to help in case of fire. Evidently an evening fire is assumed here, but "nevertheless the foreigners ought not to carry a sword." Ibid., no. 904.

[79] Opera, 21, 547. 24 July 1553. "Item et aussi ledit M. Calvin a remonstre et prie que lon ne fusse desplaisant si puys quil veoit que pour ce que lon luy veut quelque mal plusieurs murmurent et se destorment de suyvre la parolle il se retiroit a part sans plus servir: toutesfois a prie que lon veuille aouyr la parolle de Dieu et les laisser servir au nom

It was at this point that the Servetus affair intervened and became curiously twined with the right of the Consistory. The Spanish physician and amateur theologian, as is commonly known, had treated the doctrine of the Trinity with some brashness, comparing it with Cerberus, the three-headed hound of Hell. In addition he opposed infant baptism: two heresies for which Roman law prescribed death as the penalty. He had been in correspondence with Calvin, and there is some reason to think that Calvin had a hand in Servetus' arrest by the Catholic Inquisition in southern France, he being imprisoned at Vienne. Servetus escaped from the Inquisition and, making his way to Italy (perhaps), stopped over in Geneva, and was apprehended and put in prison on 13 August 1553. His trial for his heretical views began two days later, with the accuser being Nicolas de la Fontaine, French refugee, who may have served as secretary for Calvin.[80] His defender for a time was none other than Philibert Berthelier, connoisseur, lawyer and enemy of the Consistory. Berthelier was at this

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de Dieu." R.C., Vol. 47, fol. 116. Translation: "Also M. Calvin has prayed that there be no displeasure if, since he sees that, because some wish him ill, many murmuring and turning away from following the Word, he would rather retire somewhere without serving further; nevertheless has prayed that one wish to hear the Word of God and to let them [the ministers] serve in the name of God.

[80]Roget, IV, 45.

time still ex-communicate but in the midst of the trial was admitted by the Council (which also sat as jury and judge on Servetus) to the Supper without going back to the Consistory and making apology for his earlier actions. This happened on a Friday, 1 September, but Calvin's anger caused the Council to advise Berthelier, without Calvin's knowledge, that "he ought to abstain from taking and receiving for the present."[81] Calvin's violent opposition kept Berthelier from receiving the Meal that Sunday, but the issue was decided against the Consistory.

The edicts of 1541 were examined and while it was not clear by any means who had the final say, the Council voted to "hold to the edicts as they had done before."[82] Roget comments aptly: "Calvin had not advanced further concerning this point which was so close to his heart than the day of his arrival at Geneva."[83] In November the Two Hundred voted and came to the same conclusion, but put it more clearly: "And as for the Supper, that the Consistory does not have any

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[81] Opera, 21, 551. R.C., Vol. 47, fol. 145.

[82] Ibid., p. 554. 18 September. "Berthelier. Icy est tenu propos du different quest este cy devant a cause du refflus de la cene et de scavoir si le conseil porra commander que lon baille la cene a celluy qui la requerra en conseil sans quil aye monstre sa repentance en consistoire. La plus grand voix: se tenir aux editz comment lon a ca devant faict." R.C., Vol. 47, fol. 155.

[83] Roget, IV, 72.

power to prohibit it to anyone without the command of the Council."[84]

But Berthelier was not home yet. The Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève show how bitterly this decision was fought, and relates that when Berthelier came before the Consistory again on 21 December, he brought along his brother François, who lashed out against pastoral tyranny so viciously that he was also excommunicated![85] That same day all the actors in the drama (except Servetus, who had already been executed) appeared before the Council which, afraid to anger Calvin to his face, decided "that Berthelier is not yet found capable of receiving the Supper." Roget comments: "The Council, which was opposed to Calvin on this question in principle, did not dare to contradict him openly in this particular case."[86] Whether Berthelier ever received the Supper again is unclear. Peace was arranged between the warring parties early in 1554 and was sealed, as before, with a dinner. But on 20 March Berthelier was again refused

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[84] Opera, 21, 560. 7 November 1553. "Et quant au faict de la cene que le consistoire naye point de puissance de la deffendre a personne sans le commandement du conseil." R.C., Vol. 47, fol. 175.

[85] Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève au Temps de Calvin, edd. Robert M. Kingdon and Jean Francois Bergier (2 Vols; Geneva: Droz, 1962 and 1964) Vol. II, p.54,5.

[86] Roget, IV, 150,1. Opera, 21, 564. R.C., Vol. 47, fol. 197.

the Supper when he arrogantly insisted that the power to release him was in the hands of the Council which had already acted favorably.[87]

As for Servetus, he died, of course. The prosecutor, after the opening rounds, had been Calvin. (Although the official prosecutor was Claude Rigot, a Perrinist) The court was the Council, with Ami Perrin chief Syndic. The sentence was death by burning alive for the two heresies or blasphemies, a sentence that Calvin wanted to have mitigated to burning after execution. Perhaps we can see in this harsher sentence by Council's determination to oppose Calvin at this point, as on others.[88]

Then Perrin lost his grip. The Perrinist downfall, which solved the problem of the power of the Consistory, was related to the problem of the refugees. As we have seen, fear of the flood of foreigners had led to restrictive laws in the

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[87] Opera, 21, 570. 20 March 1554. Reg. du Consistoire. Also Reg. Comp. Pasteurs, p. 55. 22 March was the meeting of the Venerable Company, two days after the Consistory meeting.

[88] The decree, from Opera, 21, 557, 26 October 1553: "Icy est este parle du proces de Michiel Servet prisonnier et veu le sommaire dycelluy le rapport de ceux esquelz lon a consulte et considere les grands erreurs et blassemes est este arreste. Il soit condampne a estre mene en Champel et la estre brusle tout vyfz et soit exequute a demain et ses livres brusles." R.C., Vol. 47, fol. 169. Roget, IV, 96, points out that twenty Council members were in attendance, Perrin, P. Bonna and Bapt. Sept among them.

Spring of 1553. The French flood grew larger in 1554. The Livre des Habitants shows only seventy-eight names listed as immigrating in 1553, but 356 in 1554.[89] Opposition to the newcomers was not confined to the Seigneurie. In January one Pierre Frochat was admonished in Consistory for saying that "These fucking French don't come here for the gospel, but in order to beat other people."[90] In the Spring of 1554 a whole French village from Provence appeared at the door of Geneva and was later given unused land near Jussy and Peney. But for a time they worked on the city's fortifications and were lodged in the pestilential hospital.[91] And in July a rumor which came from Berne's Council excited the Seigneurie to believe that the Duke of Guise was going to take the city by infiltrating the ranks of the estrangers. So the syndics arose at 5 a.m. to conduct a house by house search among the newcomers' lodgings for weapons which might be turned against the city. All they found were a few arquebuses.[92]

In addition to some natural fear from outsiders, and some economic handicaps which probably led to statements like Frochat's, there is some evidence that Perrinist leaders en-

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[89]Geisendorf, p. 25-29 for 1553 and 29-44 for 1554.

[90]Roget, IV, 156n. "...que ces fottus Francois ne viennent pas icy pour l'Evangile mais pour faire battre les autres."

[91]Roset, p. 362, 3.

[92]Roget, IV, 173.

gaged in a species of gangsterism against the French. Bonivard, the prisoner of Chillon, an early chronicler of this period in Geneva, who was not always square with the Consistory himself, but was in complete disharmony with Perrin, tells us that the Perrinists would dinner with Perrin or, more likely Pierre Vandel (who was more generous), and having eaten and drunk well would sally forth to outrage or beat up some foreigner; after reporting back to their leader, he would promise them rewards: "Since you know how to beat and outrage, you will have at this election an office of assistant, you of chatelain...."[93]

If it was true that the citoyens (native born) were sniping at the French, the latter had their revenge. The 1555 election resulted in four syndics elected favorable to Calvin. The four old syndics, of course, remained on the Council but with diminished responsibility and authority. Evidently the Calvinist leaders then began to "pack" the General Council by admitting many of the French refugees as bourgeoisie. On 16 April four were admitted, two days later five more, on the 21st ten paid their fee. Nineteen were admitted in one week, when in the previous year only seven had been received.[94] Perrin and his friends did not realize

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[93]Cited in Roget, III, 285, 6n.

[94]Ibid., IV, 230. Williston Walker, John Calvin (New

what was being done to them, regarding these admissions as more money in the treasury, the better able to debasle the city, that is, reduce the debt to Basel contracted during the fight for independence to pay off Berne and Fribourg.

But by May the Perrinists were fully alarmed and sent the Lieutenant to the Council to complain that too many bourgeoisie were coming from one nation. The Council turned a deaf ear and continued to build both the treasury and the Calvinist majority in Council by admitting new persons who could pay the fee.[95] Finally the grievances and fears of the native-born leaders spilled over into a riot the evening of 16 May 1555. The attack on a few French and several of the Genevan leaders on the Calvinist side was preceded by a good deal of drinking and loud talk and was probably nothing but unplanned chauvinistic attack by a few liquored-up ruffians. But the affair was judged to be an attempted coup d'Etat by the anti-Perrinists on the Council, and Perrin and several

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York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1906), p. 300f., handles this well in English. Covelle lists seven on April 18, two the next day, nine on the 22nd, and thirteen the 25th, a total of thirty-one in eight days. p. 241,2.

[95] Opera, 21, 604. 13 May 1555. "Le Lieutenant Hudriot du Mollard (et autres) hont expose que ilz hont entendu que plusieurs du peuple se lamentent de ce que lon passe et faict tant de bourgeois mesme de une nation....Arreste quon se tient a ce que a este faict et que lon suyve nonobstant cela a faire des bourgeois." R.C., Vol. 48, fol. 70.

of his friends left the city just in time to escape death for treason.[96] He and four others, one being Balthasar Sept, were condemned to decapitation in absentia. Two other Perrinists met that unhappy fate in person, and before the year was out François Berthelier had had his head removed, while Philibert escaped to Berne with the other unhappy exiles.

One can only be saddened by this debacle and by Calvin's approval of it. It seems to have been axiomatic in Genevan politics that when emotions ran high enough someone would be on the receiving end of sharp and summary justice. At one turn it was the Eidgenots; then the Mamelukes, followed by the Artichauds, and now the Perrinists. Had the Calvinists lost, we can assume a similar fate for them.

The course of Genevan history after the defeat of the Perrinists in 1555 (sealed by the elections of 1556) till the death of Calvin in 1564 was marked on the one hand by continuing hostility from Berne, which continued to press for amnesty for the Perrinists;[97] and on the other hand Geneva found itself caught up more and more in the troubles in

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[96]The whole nasty story can be read in Roget, IV, 245-336.

[97]Perrin, Berthelier, Balt. Sept and some others didn't help their cause by their delight in riding near the city on Bernese land and insulting, threatening and even using arms against citizens of the city. e.g. cf Roget, V, 51-54, for a few such incidents, which were multiplied as the years went on.

France, the renewed threat of Savoy, and consequent need for Berne's protection.

Within the city, we find the Consistory now exercising without let the freedom of excommunication and censure for which Calvin had so long fought. The definitive decision was made 24 January 1555 by the Councils of Sixty and Two Hundred. After Calvin appeared to answer the objections of those who wanted to diminish the authority of the Consistory, arguing from Scripture and from the practice "in the Church when it was in its purity what was the true usage of excommunication," the Councils decided:

> Concerning this, despite all the efforts of Satan to reverse such holy and useful order, nevertheless it was by M. the first Syndic, S^r^ Amblard Corne, in full council declared to the said ministers that God had been victorious, and that it had been ordered both in the Council of Sixty and in the Two Hundred, that the Consistory would remain in its estate, and would have its accustomed authority, just as the Word of God conveys it, and that the ordinances already passed concerning this contained that.[98]

Yet Calvin's triumph did not insure that he would always get his way. On the one hand, in the Spring of 1556 we find the Council making a general visitation of the inhabitants of the city for the purposes of greater worship attendance, catechizing servants, making sure children were going to school, prohibiting nurses from sleeping with chil-

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[98] Reg. Comp. Pasteurs, II, p. 59.

dren, checking on fire hazards, ordering the building of privies, and seeing that men stood their own watch.[99] Thus did religion, health, sanitation and defense go hand-in-hand! But that Fall when the pastors wanted the penalties for adultery and fornication made harsher,[100] it passed the Small Council, but the Two Hundred decided the proposed edits were "too rude and should be moderated and then reviewed."[101] So it would be wrong to interpret the defeat of the "Libertines" as a total triumph for Puritanism. Many a Calvinist burgher danced despite the law and sometimes paid the penalty; pallardise et adultaire were facts of life not to b e eliminated by eliminating the practitioners. We shall see this more clearly in the succeeding chapters.

Calvin immediately found himself engaged in treaty-making with a very recalcitrant Berne which wanted the renewal of the original combourgeoisie, slated for 1556, to be on its own terms. Berne wanted conditions detrimental to Geneva's economy, as well as pardon for Perrin and company.

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[99] Roget, V, 56,7.

[100] Usually a few days on bread and water sufficed to convince the fathers of the city that the contrition was severe; a far cry from Old Testament stoning!

[101] Opera, 21, 654. 15 November 1556. "Mais quant aux edits faitz sus les iuremens blasphemes renuncemens de Dieu pallardises et adultaires pource quilz semblent a aucuns trop rudes quilz soient moderez et reveuz pour puys apres estre presentez en general." R.C., Vol. 52, fol. 96.

22 March 1555, Calvin and three others were appointed by the Council to work out the basis for a new treaty.[102] In December Calvin, with the jurists Collodon and Chevalier, was appointed to study Berne's demands and work out compromises. And when finally Berne's demands were judged to be unacceptable to a free, independent city, it was Calvin who was commissioned to respond to the Council at Berne.[103]

Soon after those long, complicated negotiations were completed, Geneva had reason to need protection. In April 1559, Philip II of Spain and Henry II of France finally ended the long struggle between their royal houses by the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis. Among the provisions of the treaty was that Duke Philibert-Emmanuel of Savoy would be given back the lands taken by Francis I in 1536. This meant trouble for Geneva, faced for the first time in over twenty years with a rejuvenated Savoy anxious to re-establish its profitable vidomnate over the small city. For the city it meant expensive preparations for fortifications, shaping up the militia, and preparing stores of food in case of siege.

But no sooner had the treaty been confirmed, and be-

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[102] Roget, V, 6.

[103] Ibid., 10, 11. Roget, who criticizes Calvin severely for his part in the death of Servetus and the condemnation of the Perrinists (although Calvin's part in the latter was limited to some letters written to his friends), is lavish in his praise for the Reformer's work in this crisis.

fore Henry could begin to turn the full weight of princely wrath against the Protestants in his domain, he was killed in a joust. The short rule of his son, Frances II, was indecisive, and the Colloquy of Poissy in the summer of 1561 and the resulting Edict of January (1562) gave cause for optimism to the Protestants of France. The Colloquy needed the services of either Calvin or Theodore Beza, now rector at the new College of Geneva, to speak for the Reformed cause. The Council refused categorically to allow Calvin to go because of the danger, unless some "notable and great persons" would come to Geneva as ostages.[104] So Beza went to France by way of Zurich, to the detriment of Geneva's new thrust into the field of higher education. Nor was Beza the only one to leave. Already the Council had refused to let refugees who had been sworn into the bourgeoisie leave the city and return to their homes in France. "They have sworn to live and die with us," the Council complained, "and at present they have no occasion for leaving to go elsewhere...and by abandoning the city thus, they show disloyalty and perjure themselves."[105]

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[104] Opera, 21, 754,5. 18 July 1561. "...a este arreste quon die auxdits Sp. ministres dadviser de ne se mettre en dangier et que quand audit Calvin quon ne permettra pas quil sorte, sinon quon aye des ostages notables et de grands personnages et que si ledit de Beze veult aller a Zurich quon luy offre bailler compagnie dun sieur et dun herault et tout ce de quoy il aura besoing." R.C., Vol. 56, fol. 217.

[105] Roget, VI, 79. This is taken from R.C., for 28 March.

However, in the end the Council was forced to rescind its action that no one be permitted to emigrate (i.e. among the bourgeoisie), "so that no one will have occasion for saying that we keep people here by force, understanding that this city is franche et libre."[106]

But this optimism was quickly dispelled by the Massacre at Vassy of Huguenots by Duke Francis de Guise, bringing on the first of the horrible religious wars which kept France in a state of turmoil for more than thirty years, and was to continue to make Geneva the home of the oppressed. In addition to refugees and the trade and travel restrictions brought on by the wars, Geneva was called upon to bear some share in financing Huguenot troops in France, to help in the defence of Lyons, after it was seized by its Protestant faction in 1562, and in general to bear a crushing financial load.

Most of these events fall outside our review, although they began during the lifetime of Calvin. It was he who advised the Council on how to help the Protestants at Lyons without committing the city too greatly.[107] And it was

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[106] Ibid., 79, 80.

[107] Roget, VI, 242f. He advised sending a medium-size party of horsemen in order that the city's manpower would be sufficient to beat off any Savoyard attack. His advice was accepted, the Genevan gallants comported themselves well in small skirmishes, constantly being warned by Calvin and the Council by letter not to involve themselves in the butchery and debauchery of wartime soldiering. A fuller treatment:

Calvin who with the Council agonized over the request from Condé, the Huguenot Prince-general in France, for a loan of more than 60,000 écus, which Calvin thought could neither be refused nor paid without ruining the city.[108]

The future held much more in store for the embattled city when Calvin died. Still ahead was the threat of the troops of the Duke of Alva on their way to inflict a Council of Blood on the Low Countries; the refugees from France after St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572; the Treaty of Soleure supposed to give protection by France from Savoyard threats; the growing hostility with Savoy and outbreak of war in 1589, which nearly exhausted the economy of Geneva.[109] Yet farther in the future was Savoy's final attempt to scale the city's walls by night--the unsuccessful "Escalade" of December 1602--the defeat of Savoy, and the treaty of St. Julien in 1603, which gave final peace with Geneva's great enemy. But Calvin's rest had come at last.

The Council record is brief. "This day about eight in the evening the spectable Ian Calvin has gone to God, sane

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A. Roget, "Expédition d'une Compagnie de Cavalerie Genevoise en 1562," Memoires et Documents...de Genève, Vol. 17, 39-57.

[108] Opera, 21, 785. 4 August 1562. R.C., Vol. 57, fol. 94.

[109] Monter, p. 42.

and whole, thanks to God, in mind and understanding."[110] It was 27 May 1564, and came after an illness of several years, which had become so acute that he had not been able to preach or lecture since February.

So ends the life of the Reformer, and ends our overlong chapter on this phase of the history of his city. He had been active in two concurrent struggles: the city's struggle for freedom from Savoy and Berne, and the church's struggle for freedom in its own realm from the city government. Both victories were won although the latter struggle was not to be complete for forty years.

We have seen enough, it is plain, to answer the inquiry posed in the last chapter about Calvin's zeal in making Christian norms the standard for society. He did care--tremendously--about society. If there is any real contrast between the two great Reformers, Luther and Calvin, it is seen most sharply not in matters like predestination nor the Real Presence in the Eucharist, the matters the theologians quarrel about, but in their attitude toward the state. For Luther and Lutheranism "the state [is] a divine order endowed by God with certain creative tasks and quite indepen-

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[110]"Ce iourdhuy environ huit heures du soir le sp. Ian Calvin est alle a Dieu sain et entier graces a Dieu de sens et entendement." Opera, 21, 815. R.C., Vol. 59, fol. 48.

dent from the church as an ecclesiastical institution."[111] For Calvin the distinction between church and state is also held, but it is a state which can expect to be badgered by the church to fulfill its duty. This we see, not so much by theory, but in practice, where for nearly twenty years Calvin fought for the right of the ecclesiastical arm to exercise its proper discipline even when the state thought that discipline an infringement on its sovereignty. So we can expect to see Calvin coming to the Council about social and economic and political matters which he thought important; we should expect to see the Consistory, for good or ill, trying to exercise influence in mundane matters. Hence the permeation of Calvin's social and economic views in Genevan society should be evident--even at this distance in time--and some evaluation possible to make.

So we now turn for a closer look behind the surface activities of the city during the period of struggle, hoping to catch here and there some glimmer of light into the ways in which these views worked their way through the city he battled and battled for.

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[111] Forell, p. 24. Italics mine. Whether cuius regio eius religio quite supports this or not could certainly be argued, since that Lutheran-Catholic solution for Germany simply left the prince head of whichever brand of church he chose. But it's unlikely that Luther would have approved that solution, though what his theory would have allowed him to do about it is unclear.

CHAPTER III

THE PERMEATION OF CALVIN'S VIEWS: POSITIVE RESULTS

At the extreme southern and western neck of Lake Leman, or Lake Geneva, the Rhone River begins its western trek into France before it turns south and heads for the Mediterranean. There Geneva lies on the shoreline of the lake, split in two by the Rhone. In 1560 by far the larger part of the city lay south of the Rhone and was connected by a bridge to the north city, known as St. Gervais.

A stranger entering the city in 1560 would have found himself in a crowded, bustling commercial town, bursting at the city walls which were its only defense against the enemy, plagued and blessed by an influx of nearly 5000 recent immigrants, many with families, and with no room to stretch. The streets, he would note, were piled with the ordure of the night and the past week, and were ornamented by public latrines and lavatories. The sewers from private homes ran into the streets and cleaning was a constant concern to the city Council. Near the city gates and at the bridges were piled the goods of merchants and fishermen, comprising most of the foodstuffs needed to sustain a city that

was not blessed with adequate arable land-holdings. Firewood was piled in the public way and was sometimes knocked over, sometimes stolen and at times confiscated and sent to the public hospital when left unattended over-long. Casks of wine, awaiting the seal of the Seigneurie, sat along the streets, and occasionally ruffians would make an opening large enough to insert a straw and suck the heady liquid. Such temptation made for constant legislation.

But the city was not inhabited by humans alone. There were ducks which were not to be shot within the city's walls. There were horses and cows, goats and pigs, chickens and sheep, dogs and, no doubt, rats, though the city's edicts mention all but the last-named. Smoke rose from hundreds of chimneys, and probably out some open windows, for Messieurs were constantly making laws about people setting fires in rooms without fireplaces and chimneys--in fact, the constant law-making indicates an endemic law-breaking.[1] Probably, in many respects it was a typical city of its day, crowded, busy and dirty.

But in one respect Geneva was unique. It was the center of the Protestant Reformation in France. Or, perhaps, infiltration would be a better and more descriptive term;

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[1] Sources Du Droit, Vol. III, nos. 976, 979, 984, 985, and 992 give us some insight into the life of the city, commercial, private and sporting.

for disguised pastors and book dealers trekking from Geneva were spreading throughout France that new regard for the Gospel that would soon launch France into internal wars that would bring an end to the House of Anjou-Valois, the enthronement of Henry IV of Navarre, the first of the Bourbons, and a century of religio-political division for the French people. The center of this heretical ferment was the chief pastor of the people of Geneva, John Calvin.

A. The Church in Politics

We have argued elsewhere that the theoretical separation of church and state existed more in theory than practice.[2] By his words Calvin expressed an ideal of separation; by his practice it is quite clear that separation for Calvin did not mean what it does for most Americans today.

> The Gospel is not to change the administration (polices) of the world, and to make laws which pertain to the temporal state. It is very true that Kings, Princes and Magistrates ought always to consult the mouth of God and to conform themselves to His Word; but our Lord has given them liberty to make the laws which they know to be proper and useful by the rule which is committed to them.[3]

We have seen, however, that Calvin fought for the church's right to enforce its discipline on its members in

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[2]See Chapter I, pages 18-24 and the conclusion of Chapter II, pages 134-35.

[3]Opera, 51, 797.

such a way that city officials feared it was usurping the liberty of the magistrates. We would expect the line to be very hard to define and to see Calvin and the other pastors constantly stepping into the political circle both as individuals and representing the church in Geneva.

Nothing shows Calvin's insistance that as individuals the pastors have full political duties and privileges, than his argument when the Perrinists extracted from the pastors their right to vote. All the city's pastors, except Calvin, were received into the bourgeoisie when they were sworn into office, and this carried with it the right to vote in General Council. The Perrinists, as part of their war against overzealous pastors, took from them the right to attend or vote, citing the practice of the priests in Roman Catholic days. But Calvin argued that they were not priests, that unlike them the pastors did not wish to be exempt from temporal judges and therefore the comparison was faulty.[4] He lost the argument, as we have seen, but his point was clear.

Calvin's own involvement is pointed up in his efforts to maintain the combourgeoisie with Berne. This alliance was absolutely necessary to Geneva's independence, and in both instances when it was essential that it be renewed despite

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[4] Opera, 21, 536,7. 28 February 1553. R.C., Vol. 47, fol. 29.

Berne's dislike of Geneva's internal affairs, Calvin was picked to help in the negotiations. In 1541 the deposed "Artichauds" were the friends of Berne, and Calvin was enemy, therefore, to both. Yet he worked patiently in the political arena and wins praise from the balanced Roget.[5] The second negotiations were even more difficult, for they stretched over a several year period immediately after the fall of the Perrinists and their flight to the protection of Berne. We have already noted Calvin's efforts then,[6] but have scarcely indicated how dependent upon him the city was. The final renewal agreement had little in it of religious matters, but dealt with the defense of Geneva against aggressors; the inviolability of the two cities from molestation (here the Word of God is named, however, as a cause for which some outsider might attempt such molestation); the adjudication of differences between the cities; imprisonment for debts of citizens of the two; and other matters mainly economic and contractual in nature.[7] How many pastors would involve themselves in such grubby bargaining when there are "spiritual" matters in plenty to take care of? But Calvin subjected himself to the political arm, worked with all the legal know-

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[5]Roget, II, 109. [6]Chapter II, pages 129 and 30.

[7]Sources du Droit, III, p. 64-73.

ledge he had inherited from his early training, and labored to effect a "perpetual alliance" firm enough to continue long after he was gone.

His efforts in such matters did not go unrewarded. Rebuffed in its efforts to pay him extra for his services, the Council finally resorted to a gift there is no record that he ever refused--wine. In November 1542 he was rewarded with "ung bossot" of old wine from the hospital winery. Early in 1546 he refused a gift of ten écus, so the Council took the money and bought "ung bossotz" of wine and asked him to take it in good part.[8] This bossette was a liquid measure often used for wine, equalling about 85.3 gallons. So the gift was not inconsiderable.[9] As he neared death, the Council twice tried to force a gift upon him to help pay for his expenses in illness, but both times the gift was refused with thanks.[10]

The real problem here is not to find evidence that the church under Calvin's leadership meddled in the political

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[8] Opera, 21, 305. 17 November 1542; 356. 25 January 1546.

[9] J.F.Bergier, Genève et l'Economie Européenne de la Renaissance (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1963), p. 110. Bergier includes here a helpful table of weights, measures and monetary equivalents.

[10] Opera, 21, 804. 22 and 24 June 1563; p. 813. 10 and 13 March 1564. In the latter instance, about two months prior to his death, he said that he had trouble in good conscience to accept even his ordinary wage inasmuch as he could not serve.

arena, but to ascertain whether Calvin considered the church to be over the magistrate in any way reminiscent of Pope Boniface's bull, Unam Sanctum, where "temporal authority [is] subject to spiritual."[11] He did not, of course. This is evident from his concern that Kings, Princes and Magistrates have the freedom to rule as God has given them liberty to do so. Even Eugene Choisy, as we have seen, who described the Calvinistic regime as a theocracy, said this did not mean the domination of the church over the state, or the clergy over the political government.[12] But it did mean for Calvin a vast, all-encompassing concern for the way the government handled its affairs. Calvin was an almost thorough-going

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[11]Henry Bettenson, ed., Documents of the Christian Church (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 161, 162. Writes Boniface VIII in 1302: "And we learn from the words of the Gospel that in this Church and in her power are two swords, the spiritual and the temporal. For when the apostles said, 'Behold, here' (that is, in the Church, since it was the apostles who spoke) 'are two swords'--the Lord did not reply, 'It is too much,' but 'It is enough.' Truly he who denies that the temporal sword is in the power of Peter, misunderstands the words of the Lord, 'Put up thy sword into the sheath.' Both are in the power of the Church, the spiritual sword and the material. But the latter is to be used for the Church, the former by her; the former by the priest, the latter by kings and captains but at the will and by the permission of the priest. The one sword, then, should be under the other, and temporal authority subject to spiritual. For when the apostle says 'there is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of God' they would not be so ordained were not one sword made subject to the other....

[12]Supra, p. 23, note 31.

secularist in the sense that the Gospel was irrevocably concerned with the world. And the magistrate who did not "consult the mouth of God and conform...to His Word," would find that the mouth of God (here, Calvin!) was giving advice anyway.

It may be that this concern for the world was overparticular. Georgia Harkness, who contradicts herself on this many times in her excellent study, writes that Calvin "ruled Geneva in the quarter century which spanned the middle of the sixteenth century...."[13] And Berthold Haller, the reformer and chief pastor in Berne, wrote in 1554, just when Calvin's trials were hardest: "I do not know any one among us [ministers at Berne] who accuse Calvin of heresy. But the truth is that some of ours love him very little because he seems to be mixed up in too many affairs."[14]

But Choisy admitted that much of the concern for morals and decency on the part of the church, i.e. by the Consistory, was commendable:

> It intervenes in order to re-establish peace and unity in families, in order to recall individuals to their duty; it takes in hand with a commendable energy reforms favorable to the small and the weak;

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[13]Harkness, preface. Yet she shows later how far he came from getting his own way at any time, and especially from 1541-1555.

[14]Quoted by Roget, IV, 181n.

> it sends for and censures the lazy and idle, the fathers and creditors who are too harsh; it shows itself without mercy for usurers, monopolizers and speculators, for merchants who defraud their clients. It combats the rudeness of the mores of the time, the brutality of men, the negligence in the care given to the ill....It interdicts the Supper to 'scandalous' persons, that is to say, those guilty of lying, fraud or of bad conduct.[15]

The theoretical separation, then, was honored in a sense: the pastors did not try to make laws. But they tried to influence the making and enforcing of good laws--laws of all kinds pertaining to the lives of men--and certainly at times stepped into that hazy boundary between concern and domination that is always difficult to define precisely. Too many problems that another age might consider political or economic seemed to Calvin and the other pastors to be religious. And their influence, as we have seen and will see over and over again, was brought to bear directly upon the Councils of Geneva.

Public Office as a Charge: Michel Roset

There is evidence that the influence of the Reformation in Geneva contributed a great deal to the political concern exercised by the magistrates. William Monter, whose Studies in Genevan Government is the latest and best work on finance, administration and politics in sixteenth century

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[15]Choisy, p. 244,5.

Geneva, writes:

> The third point to keep in mind about Geneva administration is that it was, by sixteenth-century standards, saturated with moral considerations. The Small Council sincerely believed what most European princes repeated as a cliché, namely that every public office was a charge, a duty under God to serve the public weal, and not a means of personal honor or advancement.[16]

Although this was partly attributable to the humanistic study of Cicero, Monter says that "it undoubtedly owed far more to Calvin's preachings and writings, and it seems to have been ineradicably implanted in the mores of the Republic after the defeat of the Perrinists in 1555."[17] In other words, not only did Calvin make his influence felt in direct ways and through the Consistory, but also in his influence on men who ruled the political realm.

To illustrate this, we have chosen to look briefly at the career of Michel Roset, citoyen (that is, native-born), member of Council, Syndic and ambassador. His whole life was spent under "calvinism." Born in 1534, scarcely two years before Calvin came to Geneva, his father was Claude Roset, often Council secretary, who helped bring Farel and Viret to Geneva.[18] At the age of thirteen he was sent to

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[16]Monter, p. 58. [17]Ibid.

[18]"Notice Biographique," by the editor Henry Fazy to Roset's Chroniques de Genève. Most of this information comes from Fazy's short biography.

Zurich to study, accompanied by letters of recommendation from both Calvin and Viret. There he learned to speak and read German, a great boon to the city whose commercial and diplomatic relations were most often with Berne, Basel and Zurich. At the ripe age of twenty-one, in 1555, he was elected to the Council of Two Hundred in the election won by the Calvinists over the Perrinists, and in that same year took over his father's place as secretary to the Small Council, the Twenty-Five. The next year, probably owing to his linguistic ability, he and two others were given the ticklish task of dickering for the renewal of the combourgeoisie with angry Berne (one of the others was Calvin). The negotiations involved many trips throughout Switzerland, trying to line up other cantons on the side of the Genevans. On 4 February 1557, the Council noted his illness due to pains, labors and numerous trips.

In 1560, at the age of twenty-six, he was elected to the highest office in Geneva, First Syndic. The next years saw him delegated to visit other cantons on behalf of Messieurs, and in 1563 he was beaten in Baden without provocation, by two Zurichers. In 1565, when wheat became scarce and he was again the only Councillor competent to speak German and at the same time defend the city from exorbitant rates, he was sent to Basel, then pushed on to Heidelberg

where he became ill. This time he had had it: he was sick, tired, and was losing money [probably from not being able to manage the land-holdings his family had]. But the Council was adamant: he was the one to do these jobs, he had to continue his efforts. Fazy remarks: "If Roset had a moment of weakness, who could call that a crime! He had paid in his person as no one else."[19]

After the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572, Roset dedicated his career to maintaining the independence of the city of refuge by obtaining guarantees of support from both the Swiss and from Henry III of France. Success came in 1579 in the Treaty of Soleure. The treaty tied both France and Berne to Geneva's "conservation," (Roset would not allow the proposed word, "protection"), and won from Duke Emmanuel-Philibert of Savoy this word: "So long as Roset lives, I'll have no success with this city."[20]

He then went to work on a separate treaty with the Helvetic League, or at least the Protestant cantons, Berne, Basel, Zurich and Schaffhausen. He was only half-successful, but the 1584 treaty with Berne and Zurich, patiently engineered by Roset, "was for two centuries the foundation of the

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[19] Ibid., p. xxv.

[20] Ibid., p. xxviii. Savoyard bribery attempts also failed.

relations with the Swiss cantons; it continued without change till the fall of the ancient Republic in 1798."[21]

Later he represented the city before Henry IV of France. Then, toward the end of an illustrious career, after the final failure of Savoy the night of the Escalade (1602), when the Duke finally agreed to treaty with five cantons as mediators, Roset and four other magistrates were given the task of defending Geneva's interests. The treaty of St. Julien (1603), which gave final peace with Geneva's great enemy, bears the signature of Michel Roset, then sixty-nine years old.

His later years were also spent in the service of his city. In 1605 his name was placed in nomination for Lieutenant-General, an office he had held before, and despite his pleas for retirement, he was forced to run. Truly, in Geneva every public office was a charge, as Monter argues, and one did not decline serving the public weal, even if one were Michel Roset, and deserved a peaceful senility. In this, for the first and only time, Roset was defeated. He had not wanted to run, and either his friends and admirers voted for his opponent out of respect to his wishes, or he was now over the political hill, despite continual service on the Twenty-Five.

In 1613, eight years after the death of Theodore Beza (successor to Calvin as spiritual leader of Geneva), Michel

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[21] Ibid., p. xxxi.

Roset died, age seventy-nine. His career illustrates what Monter means by a charge. This is one example of the magistrate embued with calvinistic concern for the real world. In the margin of the city council record are these words: Hic suo tempore quasi pater patrie.[22]

B. War on Poverty

> Calvin has proposed that a problem is raised among the citoyens because some have sworn the "mode of life," others not. Also some children are in papal schools and their doctrine must be investigated. Also concerning the hospital which is very badly furnished, so that the poor are suffering.[23]

Calvin's understanding of the Christian faith involved concern for all aspects of human life. Here, in his perplexity because the citoyens of Geneva would not subscribe the Confession of Faith during his first stay, Calvin continued from faith, through education, and ended up his bill of concerns with the hospital and the poor. We shall find that this concern for the impoverished comes up again and again during his lifetime in Geneva. We shall study this war on poverty under four headings: the diaconate, the hospitals, the problem of population, and the cost of living.

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[22] Ibid., xlii.

[23] Opera, 21, p. 216. 30 October 1537. "Calvinus a propose que question se porroit engendrer entre les citoyens a cause que aulcungs hont iure le mode de vivre les aultres non. Item des enfans quil sont aux escolles a la papisterie et de savoir la doctrine des enfangs. Item de lHospital quest

1. The diaconate.

In his Psalm Commentary Calvin began with a salutation to "faithful and meek (debonnaires) readers," in which he included a view of Geneva at the time of his arrival, and the sad state of the church there. Among the problems that pained him was "that there were also many pursued by poverty and hunger, others pushed by an insatiable ambition by avarice and cupidity for dishonest gain."[24] After his return in 1541, concern for the poor and ill became an official concern of both church and state through the newly-created office of deacon. This was in marked contrast to the French situation where the same condition called for all-out war, not on poverty, but on the poor themselves! Zeller says that in France the number of poor without jobs grew rapidly during the second quarter of the century, "...probably in connection with the development of permanent or semi-permanent armies, which uprooted quantities of young men and only temporarily furnished them with a livelihood."[25] Whatever the reason, these vagabonds became a veritable army, and in the first years of the reign of Francis I Paris declared war on "ras-

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tresmal moble don les paovres soffrent." R.C., Vol. 31, fol. 81.

[24] Opera, 31, 30.

[25] Gaston Zeller, Les Institutions de la France au XVI^e Siècle (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), p. 384.

cals, vagabonds and other beggars," forcibly employing them on public works, carrying off filth and rubbish, cleaning sewers, repairing ramparts and such activities, and often "...being transformed into veritable galley-slaves (forçats): they worked chained two by two, under the threat of whip or prison."[26] From time to time Parlement kicked out those who had been parisians less than two years, and the king declared in August of 1536, that being out-of-work and begging were offences punishable by whip, thus effectively ending mendicity in Paris. Those officially exempt from work were marked with a special sign, a cross of red and yellow on the right shoulder.[27]

How different Geneva's concern for the poor and the refugee! Perhaps our best tack will be to reproduce that part of the Church Ordinances, drafted by Calvin in 1541, which dealt with the "fourth order of ecclesiastical government, that is, the Deacons."[28]

> There were always two kinds in the ancient Church, the one deputed to receive, dispense and hold goods for the poor, not only daily alms, but

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[26] Ibid., p. 386. [27] Ibid.

[28] The French text may be found in Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève au Temps de Calvin, I, p. 1ff. The translation here used is that of J. K. S. Reid, Volume 22 of The Library of Christian Classics, Calvin: Theological Treatises (London: SCM Press, 1954), p. 64-66. Unlike Reid, who uses footnotes, I have added the few important additions made by the Council in brackets.

also possessions, rents and pensions; the other to tend and care for the sick and administer allowances to the poor. This custom we follow again now for we have procurators and hospitallers. [And in order to avoid confusion...one of the four procurators is to be receptionist at the said hospital for all its goods, and is to have a suitable wage, in order that he discharge his office properly.]

The [number of four procurators is to remain as it is, of whom one will have charge of reception, as has been said, so that the] number of procurators appointed for this hospital seems to us to be proper; but we wish that there be also a separate reception office, so that not only provisions be in time made better, but that those who wish to do some charity may be more certain that the gift will not be employed otherwise than they intend. And if the revenue assigned by their Lordships be insufficient, or should extraordinary necessity arise, the Seigneury will advise about adjustment, according to the need they see.

The election of both procurators and hospitallers is to take place like that of the elders; and in electing them the rule proposed by Paul for the deacons is to be followed.

With regard to the office of procurator, we think the rules which have already been imposed on them by us are good, by means of which, in urgent affairs, and where there is danger in deferment, and chiefly when there is no grave difficulty or question of great expense, they are not obliged always to be meeting, but one or two can do what is reasonable in the absence of the others.

It will be their duty to watch diligently that the public hospital is well maintained, and that this be so both for the sick and the old people unable to work, widowed women, orphaned children and other poor creatures. The sick are always to be lodged in a set of rooms separate from the other people who are unable to work, old men, widowed women, orphaned children, and the other poor.

Moreover, care for the poor dispersed through the city should be revived, as the procurators may arrange it.

> Moreover, besides the hospital for those passing through which must be maintained, there should be some attention given to any recognized as worthy of special charity. For this purpose, a special room should be set aside to receive those who ought to be assisted by the procurators, which is to be reserved for this business.
>
> It should above all be demanded that the families of the hospitallers be honourably ruled in accordance with the will of God, since they have to govern houses dedicated to God.
>
> The ministers must on their side inquire whether there be any lack or want of anything, in order to ask and desire the Seigneury to put it in order. To do this, some of their company with the procurators should visit the hospital every three months, to ascertain if all is in order.
>
> It would also be good, not only for the poor of the hospital, but also for those of the city who cannot help themselves, that they have a doctor and a surgeon of their own [at the expense of the city] who should still practice in the city, but meanwhile be required to have care of the hospital and to visit the other poor.
>
> As for the hospital for plague, it should be wholly separate and apart, and especially if it happen that the city be visited by this scourge of God.
>
> For the rest, to discourage mendicancy which is contrary to good order, it would be well, and we have so ordered it, that there be one of our officials at the entrance of the churches to remove from the place those who loiter; and if there be any who give offence or offer insolence to bring them to one of the Lords Syndic. Similarly for the rest of the time, let the Overseers of Tens take care that the total prohibition of begging be well observed.

The diaconate was organized, then, to handle money, to order and supervise the hospital and to aid the poor of the city; it was lay in its membership, though the ministers

should inquire about the work of the deacons, and make quarterly visits to the hospital to see that the people there were given proper attention.

The deacons had four sources of income: monies appropriated by the Council for the hospital and the wages of the hospitaller and surgeon; revenue from fines; gifts or alms; and the sale of items devoted to charity. Let us briefly illustrate each source.

Part of the yearly budgeted expenditure of the city Treasurer was for the public almshouse, i.e. the hospital. In 1544 the fifth largest public expenditure was the 1,477 florins devoted to this purpose, plus the 100 florin wage of the hospitaller, and 82 1/2 florins for heralds and surgeon.[29] Fines were a regular source of income. For example, in the Ordinances for the Country Parishes, written by Calvin and passed in 1546, all fines levied were divided so that one-third of the receipts went to the poor of the parish and place, and another third to the procureurs, i.e. the deacons.[30] And this is the rule, not the exception; one con-

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[29] From the accounts of Treasurer Amblard Corne, given in Monter, p. 18. Only quit rents and interest paid at Basel (fl. 6,213 1/2), purchases for public domain (fl. 2,706 1/2), the wages of seventeen ministers (fl. 3,995), and embassies and messengers, chiefly in France (fl. 3,698 1/2) cost more.

[30] Reg. Comp. Pasteurs, I, p. 19. "...le tiers aux procureurs des parroisses, le tiers au chastelain et curial, et l'aultre tiers aux paouvres de la parroisse et lieu." Reid

stantly finds references to the fact that one third of the income of fines went to procureurs or to the hospital.

The third way of obtaining money for the work of the diaconate was to solicit gifts. For example, on 24 May 1547, the pastors carried a complaint to the Council that the hospital for the poor lacked wine, wood and other things, because the income from church properties and goods given for the hospital were used elsewhere, and this, in turn, made people hesitant to give their money for the hospital. This was a direct slam at a Council that was robbing Peter to pay Paul, for they complained that the Council was taking such donations and using them for some other public need.[31]

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translates procureurs here as "Guardians," though in the Eccl. Ordonnances as "procurator."

[31] Opera, 21, p. 404,5. 24 May 1547. "M. Calvin et les ministres hont remonstre comme par ca devant lon avoyt donne quelque ordre sus le gouvernement delhospital et des pouvres tant ceulx de la ville que des subgetz et aultres estrangiers et touteffoys il leurs est venu a notice que le cas est tresmal en ordre et povrement guider et que quant il az du pain il ny a pas de vin de boys et aultres choses et que dieu ayant entendus ledit affaire se courrousera contre nous actendus mesme que les biens ne sont pas dedie sinon pour les povres daultant que sont biens des eglises et que se doibvent la applicque et non allieurs et que ainsin faisant lon donneroyt couraige a plusieurs bonnes gens de faire du bien a lhospital mais que quant long voyt que le bien next pas applicque la il sent detornant; parquoy est de besoings que lon il mecte de lordre et que lestat dudit hospital soyt faictz etc. et que ce qui sera donne a lhospital soyt laisse a lhospital et non le retirer par la Sgrie. ny convertir en bien publicque sinon que fust en cas de neccessite de ce qui pourroyt rester en revenus dudit hospital. Ordonne que lon visite les ordon-

The fourth source of revenue for the work of the diaconate--the sale of items devoted to charity--is illustrated well by the Psalm translation of Theodore Beza, which he had given to the deacons to help finance their work. 30 June 1561, we read of their request to be allowed to print Beza's new metrical work:

> The deacons charged with the dispensation to the poor refugees have presented their request that they be permitted to print the rest of the Psalms composed by Theodore de Beza minister, which he has given for the relief of the said impoverished--to grant them the "privilege" for ten years. It is agreed to consult Calvin and Beza, ministers.[32]

Unfortunately we must report that the printers were not always prompt in paying the royalties. In 1563 the deacons had to appear before the Council to get them to pay, in 1565 Jean Crespin had to be ordered to pay the author's percentage to the deacons, and two years later Beza himself had

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nances et status sur ce faict et si az quelque chose qui ne soyt bien que soyent comis deux douzanie de Messieurs pour il remellierer ou sinon que ledit affaire se mecte a fin et arreste entierementz et que ledit estat soyt faict par ledit hospital." R.C., Vol. 42, fol. 116. Biens des eglises probably refers to remnants of Catholic holdings, or tithes therefrom. This is obscure and clarification is not easy.

[32] Opera, 21, 752. "Les diacres commis a la dispensation des pauvres estrangiers ont presente requeste de leur permettre imprimer la reste des pseaumes composez par sp. Theodore de Beze ministres lesquelz il a donnes pour le soulagement desdits povres: de leur ottroyer privilege pour dix ans. Et sus ce arreste den avoir advis des sp. Calvin et Beze minstres." R.C., Vol. 55, fol. 210.

to step in to make them pay their "debvoir aux paouvres pour l'impression des pseaumes."[33]

Here, then, we have seen that the church under Calvin was not content to have its weight felt in the social arena solely through the efforts of good men acting as individuals. Instead church and state cooperated as one in concern for the poor. Gustave Weigel, S. J., has remarked somewhere that Protestant charity lacks the heart of Catholic charity but is better organized. The first part of his statement we cannot document (nor do we wish to!); but that Genevan charity was well-organized was insured by the work of the deacons, and by the pastors' concern for that work. Certainly that refugee-crowded city needed such organization and, thanks to the genius of Calvin, received it.

2. The Hospitals

The work of the deacons was not limited to the city's two hospitals, but certainly centered about these institutions. At one time there had been several small hospitals in Geneva--one for travellers, one for the sick, another for the indigent, etc. On 29 November 1535, upon the departure of the ecclesiastics but before Calvin came to the city, the Council founded a new inclusive hospital in the ancient con-

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33Paul Chaix, Recherches sur L'Imprimerie à Genève de 1550 a 1564 (Geneva: E. Droz, 1954), p. 77.

vent of Sainte Claire, remodeling and stocking it with revenues from ecclesiastical goods and properties abandoned by the departed clergy. It is clear from the Church Ordinances that this hospital, sometimes called the Hospital of the Holy Spirit, was for the ill, the aged, widows, orphans and those without means of subsistence, as well as a refuge for the traveller. In addition to this all-purpose sanctuary, there was also provided beyond the city walls a plague hospital which was used from time to time. It is unclear just what that building was formerly used for, but it was evidently the only building left standing when the city's faubourgs, or suburbs, were torn down as a measure of defense beginning in 1534.

During the Middle Ages hospitals of various types were usually associated with religious groups. But by this time, that pattern was no longer true in France; the hospitals in larger cities had been or were being secularized. According to Gaston Zeller, the transfer of such hospitals from religious orders to lay control was due to the relaxation of standards in the charitable orders, which led to l'anarchie grandissante in many hospitals. In Paris the Parlement had been called in to arbitrate between the religious order and the chapter at L'Hôtel-Dieu in 1495, and had totally reorganized the work, putting in eight proviseurs responsible to the city rather than the cathedral chapter. Of

course religious decline was not the only reason. The increase in the number of poor, which we have already noted; the debasement of chapter revenues based on land holdings--these also contributed to this secularization. By 1547 all hospital administrations had to render account to the king, and after 1560 ordinances were passed which stipulated that in France all hospitals were to be administered by laymen.[34] One glimpse of this can be seen at Lyons, where in 1486 the consulate (city council) took over from the church the supervision of the Hôtel-Dieu and other hospitals originally founded by religious orders.[35] The Genevan method seems, on the surface at least, to have been better run: in Lyons, orphans who were not apprenticed early were sent out to beg! In Geneva begging, of course, was illegal, and we know that children there had a schoolmaster of their own[36] and were weekly brought before the procureurs so that those ready for apprenticeship or service (the girls) could be assigned.[37]

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[34]Zeller, p. 381-3.

[35]Natalie A.Z. Davis, "Protestantism and the Printing Workers of Lyons: a Study in the Problem of Religion and Social Class during the Reformation" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Michigan, 1959), p. 68.

[36]e.g. Reg. Comp. Pasteurs, II, p. 70, for January 1557, where a new schoolmaster was appointed for the hospital, and when he was ordained to the ministry a replacement was made. Ibid., p. 77.

[37]Sources du Droit, III, no. 905. 12 May 1553, "Ordonnances sur l'Hôpital."

Calvin's own concern for the hospital is occasionally seen in the pages of the ancient records. On 29 August 1544, it was he who reported to the Council about the mismanagement of the present hospitaller.

> M. Calvin, minister, has reported that he has heard that Justin, the hospitaller of the hospital of the Holy Spirit, is a thief, and has tried to take an ecu from a foreigner, and moreover, sells the bread that is taken to the poor sick, and takes their allowance from them, and ransacks what they carry on them. He believes these reports. Ordered that this should be looked into diligently, and if it is so, he should be chastized and removed from his office. [He was removed that day.][38]

And Calvin was one of five commissioned by the City Council to establish at the hospital a cloth-making or fustian business, so that with the times dear and the poor indigent many, none would need to be idle.[39] Whether this should be listed as W.P.A., or War on Poverty or a government-sponsored training program is unclear. What is clear is that the government of the city with the aid of Calvin, the

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[38] Opera, 21, p. 343. "M. Calvin ministre. Lequelt a refferuz quil a entendu que Iustin lhospitallier de lhospital S. esperit est larron et a voulsu oster a une femme estrangiere ung escus et daventage vend les pain que lon porte aux povres malades et leur ravy leur pidance et follie ce quil porte sur eulx: et que lon il aye de ladvis. Ordonne quil il soyent diligemment prinses informacions de cella et si lest ainsin soyt chastie et denys de son office.

[39] Roget, II, p. 150. Roget points out that Calvin did not bring the industry single-handedly to the hospital, as is sometimes thought.

chief pastor, took a firm grip at a time of economic necessity and set up a new industry to be overseen by the procureurs, the deacons of the church.

"Socialized Medicine" was in vogue in Geneva, as we have already seen.[40] The doctor and surgeon who served the hospital did so at the city's expense. This arrangement was continued after the death of Calvin, and even extended. On 11 May 1569, "Ordinances concerning the Estate of Medicine, Pharmacy and Surgery" were passed, and each doctor (médicin) was required to visit without charge the poor in his area:

> Besides the doctors appointed for the large hospital and for the poor refugees, each doctor is required to visit the poor sick in the quarter in which he lives, being required by charity.[41]

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[40] Supra, p. 153.

[41] Cited by Leon Gautier, La Médicine à Genève Jusqu'a la Fin du Dix-Huitième Siecle (Geneva: Georg, 1906), p. 177. Later, on 14 March 1570, the Council assigned the doctors their places during a plague. Two were given charge of the stricken, one to care for the ill "only at a distance." Ibid., p. 45. Philippe Rustici--who was also responsible for the first Protestant translation of the Bible into Italian--complained of his wages, which indicates that he was being paid by the city. (p.45) Throughout all November 1570, he argued about his pay, finally getting two or three sols per visit, instead of the six he had wanted. Later that same doctor at the hospital (He was hired at 120 florins per year besides lodging) was convicted of adultery, thrown in prison, released, but sent back in again for hitting another doctor. He was exiled from the city, returned, and was editor of several almanacs, which were printed, after being examined by Beza, "on condition that he strike out the prognostications." (p. 46-49)

It should not be forgotten that the hospitaller was also a deacon. His was a full-time job which netted him a small salary, but full living expenses. Once a week, on Sunday, he had to report to the other deacons, the four procureurs, about the state of the hospital. We learn from the updated hospital edict of May 1553, that this was a job requiring a man of diverse knowledge, skilled in several metiers, and demanding almost limitless patience. He not only had to account for all the orphans, the poor, old, ill and over-night guests who were housed, fed, taught and tended at city expense, but also had to oversee vineyards, hemp, grain and turnip fields, keep an eye out for the dozen cows, horses, pigs and other livestock, be foreman for the weaving and jug-making industries at the hospital--all this, and make a weekly account to the procureurs.[42] No wonder that the next entry has to do with the hiring of a new hospitaller!

The church, with Calvin as undeclared bishop, was vitally concerned with the bodies, as well as the souls, of its members. Nothing in Geneva bears this out more clearly than the diaconate, and that body's chief arena of action, the hospitals. Here Calvin's influence permeated with a vengeance.

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[42] Sources du Droit, III, no. 905. 12 May 1553, "Ordonnances sur l'Hôpital."

3. The Problem of Population

A strong contributor to the ranks of the impoverished at Geneva was the steady growth in population caused by the immigration of refugees, especially from France. This has already been discussed at great length, but so far no estimate has been made about how much of a problem this was. My conclusion is that it was more of a problem than even the careful Genevan historians admit. It should be born in mind, by the way, that this increase in the city's population from about 1542 to 1561 was almost entirely within the city's walls, the destruction of the faubourgs meant that there was to be no building outside the city's walls, lest the enemy be encouraged to approach the city under cover of such structures.

How large was Geneva? Louis Binz arrives at these figures: 4,000 in 1407 (858 feux, hearths, with an average of 4 persons per feu, plus clergy); 7600 in 1449; 9400 in 1464. After that date he thinks census lists are not complete enough for accurate measurement.[43] Louis Blondel estimates that because of the destruction of the faubourgs the population tumbled from "more than 11,000 in 1475 to 10,300 in 1537."[44] But Naef and others estimate that before the Refor-

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[43]Louis Binz, "La population du diocèse de Genève à la fin du moyen age," Melanges d'Histoire Économique et Sociale en hommage au professor Antony Babel (2 Vol.; Geneva, 1963), I, 162-167.

[44]Histoire de Genève, p. 227. There were 1031 mai-

mation, ten per cent of the population was ecclesiastical, either clergy (400-500 priests, monks, nuns, etc.) or lay functionaries--notaries, clerks, officers of justice--many connected with the civil court, which was in the bishop's jurisdiction.[45] Hence, when most of them left town with their Savoyard friends, that in itself could count for a population loss of nearly 1,000 persons. There has been little attempt to assess the population loss caused by the decline of the fairs near the end of the fifteenth century.

In 1542 the influx began, according to Michel Roset.[46] By 1549 it was large enough that the Book of Habitants was opened and kept open till 1560, with the names of family heads enrolled, and usually the place from which they came and the occupation of the bread winner noted. There were 4,776 such names inscribed in that first book.[47] This means that be-

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sons listed in 1537. The problem, of course, is to figure just how many people, on the average, shared a house. Blondel estimates ten, but others like Doumergue and Williston Walker estimate thirteen per house, and arrive at a population of about 13,900. This figure is also accepted by Georgia Harkness, p. 8. Cf. Emile Doumergue, Jean Calvin: Les hommes et les choses de son temps (7 vols.; Lausanne, 1899-1927), III, 73n. 74. Walker, p. 161.

[45]Henri Naef, Les Origines de la Réforme à Geneve (Geneva: E. Droz, 1936), p. 23-25.

[46]Roset, p. 297.

[47]Paul F. Geisendorf, ed., Livre des Habitants de Genève, I, p. 240,1.

tween 1542 and 1560 well over 5,000 workers entered the city of Geneva, a city of 10,300, with many of them accompanied by families. Doumergue adds to this list those "more or less resident who for diverse reasons did not seek to regularize their situation, and who were tolerated, except by accident."[48] This is hard to know. The city was very conscious of the strangers within its gates; constant efforts were made to see that everyone signed-up or left town. I think there were not too many who stayed any length of time who escaped the eyes of the captains of quarters, and thus escaped enrollment.

How many had families and how large these families were is impossible to say. On 26 November 1554, it was proposed in Council

> that daily there come many foreigners to live who are unknown people, and that many may be of evil life or poor and overburdened with children, concerning which it should be necessary to give some order, so that the good should be received and the bad rejected.[49]

That many were poor and overburdened with children sounds quite reasonable. The Perrinists, in power at the time, were unhappy; the deacons and the hospital must have been busy.

If we could assume that births and deaths balanced each other, then we could simply add to 10,300 (itself an educated guess) a figure of about 10,000 (figuring for each

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[48]Doumergue, III, 74. [49]Roget, IV, 183.

refugee an average of only one dependent) and arrive at a figure of 20,000 in 1559, the peak year for the refugee. But of course, some people came only to leave again when some immediate danger was over, and a good deal of guesswork makes any projection hazardous. Baptismal records are available in the archives d'Etat but one would need to journey to Geneva to see them.[50]

Quite frankly, the population explosion in Geneva during the 1550's seems to the writer to have been quite serious--more serious than those scholars who settle for 10,300 in 1537 and 13,000 in 1589, but allow the interim to go undiscussed, indicate. Those figures are probably accurate

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[50]Roget occasionally includes death statistics. 25 December 1550 a notice in the R.C. reads: "M. Claude Faure, minister of the hospital, has presented his list of deceased, which is not complete, though he has kept it all year, and says that in the city 333 died and from St. Gervais 67." Roget III, 131n. So 400 persons died in 1550. In 1552, 442 died. (III, 274n.) 1553 saw 550 depart, 105 in one week. (IV, 159) In 1558, 638 died in nine months, which would be pro rata 850 for the year. In 1560, 498 in little more than six months, perhaps 950 for the year (V, 204n. and VI, 73). But in 1561 only 209 for the last seven months, or about 360 for the year (VI, 194). In 1562, 309 for the last seven months or about 470 for the year. And, finally, 1564, 284 from 1 January to 30 June, one being Calvin, or 568 for the year (VII, 40,1). Were any of these plague years? Probably not what they called plague, though when 105 died in a week in 1553, it could surely be called an epidemic of some sort. The plagues mentioned during this period fall in 1543-4, or before Roget found any statistics (or at least before he mentions any), and 1564, after Calvin had died. These plagues rate a further mention in Chapter IV.

enough. But during this interim a good 10,000 people must have entered the city and some stayed throughout the period. One indication of the seriousness of the problem is the opening of two new churches in 1559, "because a large part of the people who enter St. Peter's are not able to hear."[51]

Although inconclusive as to numbers, this discussion throws light on the terrific task facing church and state in Geneva to take care of the floods of people inundating the city. Even providing subsistence living must have strained the resources of the tiny republic. In this light, the work of procureurs and hospitallers--deacons all--is now seen as nothing short of heroic.

4. Addendum: Cost of Living

What effect did refugees and changing times have on

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[51] Opera, 21, p. 720. 7 August 1559. They re-opened St. Germain "...a cause de la multitude du peuple il soit requys de trover moyen quon ayt encore ung temple ou prescher: mesme sil estoit possible qui Rive [old monastery used for school, but the chapel evidently unused] fut restaure veu que une grande partie du peuple qui entre a S. Pierre ne peult entendre....Arreste que quant es temples pour le present one presche a Nostre Dame la nefve." R.C., 55, fol. 78. So, in addition to Magdalen, St. Pierre and St. Gervais, where there had been regular services at least since the Fall of 1541, there were added services at St. Germain and Notre Dame the New, with the possibility of restoring the Rive monastery chapel. This probably did not mean weekday services, but only on Wednesday morning, the day of prayer, and Sunday morning at the service for the "accustomed hour" (8 or 9 a.m.--so Choisy, p. 233), and perhaps the day-break service on Sunday as well.

the cost of living in Geneva during this period? Certainly times got harder in the early 1550's, and occasionally the French were blamed for the rise.[52] But, of course, times had been hard in Geneva for a good long time. The fairs of the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth century were dead; the economic hub of Europe had shifted from Italy to the Low Countries, hence the Swiss cities were no longer at the center of commerce. All this, plus tension with Savoy and the highwaymen tactics of the "Gentlemen of the Spoon," had left Geneva in sad financial shape by the time Calvin came to the city.[53] Authorities agree that the later wealth of the city was directly attributable to the refugees, but the short-term effects were probably disastrous.[54]

Who were these refugees? Of the 4,776 names inscribed in the Livre des Habitants, 2,247 have their profession

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[52]In 1551 one woman was excommunicated for blaming the higher cost of living on the French. "Pernette femme de Pierre Bertet dict Tallabard accusée et convaincus d'avoir dit que les Francais amenaient la cherte a Genève...est exclue de la cene." She was also accused of saying one of the preachers had preached that all who lived previous to that time had been damned.

[53]Antony Babel, Histoire Corporative de l'Horlogerie, de l'Orfevrerie et des Industries Annexes (Geneva: Georg, 1916), p. 33,4.

[54]Babel, p. 35,6 writes that the refugees made a radical economic transformation in Geneva, arriving without resources, but with a profession to practice which brought life to Genevan industry and economy.

indicated. Of these the predominance of artisans is overwhelming, 1,536 of them being gens mechaniques, what Mrs. Davis in her Lyons study calls the menu peuple, the little people of the lower middle and lower classes.[55] Of the remainder, 275 were from the liberal professions (seventy-four in some aspect of medicine, fifty scholars, plus notaries, lawyers, judges, teachers, ministers), 180 were merchants and commercial people, seventy were of the nobility, seventy-seven peasants and one hundred hard to classify. Of the artisans, 699 were textile workers of various kinds, 264 worked in leather (mainly shoemakers), 249 in the building trades, 228 metal workers and sixty-seven goldsmiths. Geisendorf thinks that of the unclassified even more would have been "average" people, since it is unlikely that anyone of importance had his trade or degree neglected when he swore loyalty to the city and the Gospel.[56] The shortage of both nobility and peasantry shows that the man tied to the soil either did

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[55]Davis, p. 35. The rest of the information on occupations comes from Paul Geisendorf, "Metiers et conditions sociales du premier Refuge à Genève, 1549-1587," Melanges... Antony Babel, I, 239-249.

[56]Geisendorf, op. cit., p. 246. In the second refugee period, 1572-1574, the liberal professions--jurists, medical men, scholars and school masters, with some book sellers, printers and ministers--made up a much higher percentage. But in the third book, 1585-1587, the list is much like the first. The French Huguenot constituency was quite average, neither noble predominantly, nor bourgeois.

not infect readily with heretical views, or was in an unfavorable moving situation. One can pick up shoemakers tools and travel to Geneva; one cannot take his farm.

These immigrants were sometimes put on relief (rather like W.P.A.) when they came to the city without places to work. In 1545, before the flood was strong enough to warrant opening a special book of newcomers, Calvin and Farel were sent to Berne, Basel, Zurich and Strassbourg to arrange help for refugees escaping the wrath of Francis I after the affair of the placards.[57] And Viret came to the Council two weeks later requesting work "for the poor persecuted faithful," who did not wish to remain idle. The Council "ordered that they should be put to work for the city, each according to his ability."[58] Roget reports that for the most part this meant working on construction of the ramparts of the city.[59] This same plan was followed in 1554.

Evidently this system also included a certain amount of practice of "from each according to his ability to each according to his need," among the refugees. Roset reports it

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[57] Opera, 21, 353. 4 May 1545. R.C., Vol. 40, fol. 102.

[58] Ibid., 16 May 1545. R.C., Vol. 40, fol. 118.

[59] Roget, II, 168. In 1548, one Iehan Beguyn, a cloth-maker, was admitted gratis because "he has set up a cloth-making trade in this city by means of which many poor people live." Covelle, p. 235.

this way:

> That was the first occasion that a little after the foreigners came for the Word of God, they established a system of contribution among themselves in order to give alms to the poor, and appointed deacons and receivers from each nation or country, who were to collect everything into one purse and administer it to the needy and ill, and were to teach trades to the young people and others who had no means of livelihood. Many good personages of France sent good sums, so that this system has been maintained to this day [June 1562] with great fruit and solace for those who have been destitute of all other human means in the extremity of persecution.[60]

And later, in the Spring of 1554, when about 400 families came at once, Roset relates how they were put to work digging ditches, being paid by the work, not the day, so that they could work as much or as little as they wanted.[61]

That inflation grew as the 1550's began is quite evident. Wages probably did not drop, probably even rose. But as industry began to move with the new influx of workers, as

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[60]Roset, Chroniques, p. 309. "Cela fut des premières occasions que peu de temps apres les estrangiers venus pour la Parole de Dieu establirent ung ordre de contribution entre eulx pour faire l'aumosne aux pauvres & cǫmmirent des diacres & recepveurs de chascune nation ou countree, qui raportoient le tout en une bourse & en administroient ès disetteux & malades & faisoient aprendre des mestiers aux jeunes gens & aux autres qui n'avoient moyen de vivre. Plusieurs bons personnages de la France y on envoyé de bonnes sommes, tellement que cest ordre a esté entretenu jusques aujourdhuy avec grand fruit & soulagement de ceux qui estoient destituez de tous autres moyens humains, ès extremitez des persecutions."

[61]Ibid., p. 362,3.

new industries began or grew larger, and as housing became dearer, there is no doubt but what the cost of living must have risen. Most of the refugees were artisans, but enough must have been wealthy enough "to provide a needed influx of new capital and new industry."[62] Finally, to halt the rise in prices, perhaps, or perhaps because the city treasury was nearing bankruptcy--it is not clear which--the city's employees had their wages lowered. This took place in May 1551, before the hardest influx of refugees had yet taken place. The Syndics reduced their own wages from 125 florins to one hundred, the Treasurer from 250 to 200, the hospitaller from one hundred to fifty. So these magistrates decided to start where few politicians today would even think of beginning--with their own salaries.[63]

Probably the hardest blow for the Geneva economy was the sudden fluctuation apt to come in wheat prices. In the Spring of 1544, for example, wheat was seven florins per coupe, 233% higher than the three florins that it brought in 1536.[64] When it reached that same level in 1557, the Council

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[62]Monter, p. 24. I would think Bergier's language too strong when he writes of "vast movements of capital following the Huguenot flight." Bergier, p. 83. However, he may have in mind refugees of the next century.

[63]Roget, III, 211,2.

[64]Roget, II, 78-80. The percentages are mine, so no mathematical mistake should be blamed on Roget.

opened the city's granaries and sold wheat in the city and country for 5 florins, and then, because this good price caused it to disappear too quickly and they feared hoarding, they raised it to six.[65]

There is no indication that the men of Geneva knew what to do about the rise in cost of living. To lower their own salaries was of no value, and of course, none of them lived on his wages as Syndic or secretary. A later attempt was made to put a ceiling on wages--which we shall discuss in Chapter IV--but this probably did not work either. All we can say is that though the Geneva minted florin became more plentiful, it was worth less, the ecu d'or au soleil of Savoy being worth four and one half florins in 1536, more than five florins in 1557, and five and one half florins in 1568. So, by the gold standard, the florin had devalued 22% in thirty years. At the same time, money was more plentiful. The city's revenues were 21,790 florins in 1540, 34,400 florins in 1550, and 52,454 florins in 1555.[66] The city was de-

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[65] Roset, p. 399. According to Bergier, p. 110, a coupe held 79.365 liters, or on our scale, 2.25 bushels.

[66] Monter, p. 126. I have extracted these from the "Table of Net Revenues of Geneva Treasuries." The farm on customs duties shows a similar rise--856 florins in 1540, 1,802 in 1550, and 3,154 in 1555; similarly the gabelle on meat, which was also farmed out: 1,716 for 1541, 2,620 for 1550, and 3,640 for 1555. In each case, note that the receipts rose quite sharply for the last five year period.

finitely richer.

This fragmentary and uncertain information has little practical value for our study. What it does is indicate how inadequate our knowledge is and how shaky any generalizations we make from it. Certain things one dares to state: prices did rise, and wages rose with them; sometimes the fluctuation was quite sharp, a situation true in any fairly simple economic system when a basic commodity (here, wheat primarily, though wine also) becomes scarce; the city stepped in at least once to alleviate the gouging prices being asked on stored or hoarded wheat; the devaluation of the florin was not as sharp as the rise in city income, which surely reflected a rise in money circulation in Geneva.

C. Sumptuary Laws

Although not usually recognized as such by humanities instructors, the infamous "Sumptuary Laws" enacted by the Council in 1558 were actually part of the war on poverty, or at least against the sort of "conspicuous consumption" that highlights the difference between rich and poor. This is quite clear from the testimony of the Consistory's representative, the minister Des Gallars, when he presented the request for such laws to the Council.

> M. Nic. des Gallars, representing the Consistory, has proposed that inasmuch as superfluity and excess increase among us in place of diminishing so that

> great scandal is given to others who thinking us to be Christians, seeing such excess, are scandalized.

The Council's decision to draw up such laws contains the same reasoning:

> Ordered that there be provided by means of cries [public proclamations] which will be made, but that there be conference with the ministers in order to make them, in order to find some good means of stopping such superfluities which engender many evils and nourish gourmandizing pride, then bring poverty, high cost of living, and are the cause of the destruction of many; moreover the principal is that God is greatly offended....[67]

While the edicts themselves have been lost, the preface to the "Ordonnance somptuaire" hits only at dress and food, the two things Des Gallars complained about in his request to Messieurs. After defining certain hair arrangements and types of adornment that were considered over-done, the principal is stated: "and generally all excess in dress both for men and women." Then the question of banqueting is answered so that banquets cannot feature more than three courses and

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[67] Opera, 21, 705. 27 September 1558. "M. Nic. des Gallars de la part du Consistoire a propose que dautant que les superfluites et exces accroissent entre nous au lieu de diminuer tellement que par ce moyen est donne grand scandale aux autres qui nous pensans trouver chrestiens voyans telz exces sont scandalizez....Arreste quon y provoye par moyen de cries qui se feront mais pour icelles faire quon ayt advys avec les ministres pour trouver quelque bon moyen et empescher telles superfluites lesquelles engendrent plusieurs maux et nourrissent orgueil gourmandise puys ameynent pauvrete chierte de vivres et sont cause de la destruction de plusieurs oultre le principal quest que Dieu y est grandement offence...." R.C., Vol. 54, fol. 295.

more than four dishes per course.[68]

Today we might mock the paternalism of a Council concerned because people who worked by the day spent their money in taverns and thus lived in poverty,[69] but there is no mistaking the concern on the part of both pastors and Council. (It should be noted that this took place after the victory of the Calvinists.) The poor were not poor by some divine fiat that made the concern of the state irrelevant. Everything was done to give man opportunity to rise out of impoverishment to a more comfortable station in life. This is even illustrated by the laws concerning games. It is true that there are constant references in the Council records about the prohibition of cards, dice and certain other games; but the concern was not for games in themselves, but always the evils of gambling. No doubt it was as evident then as it is today that gambling hits the poor hardest. Games were not frowned upon, and Sunday games were permitted also, except for the four Sundays per year when the Supper was celebrated.[70]

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[68] Sources du Droit, III, no. 974. 11 October 1558.

[69] Opera, 21, p. 632. 23 March 1556. "Aussi ont propose que non obstant les deffences des tavernes totesfois elles commencent a revenir en vaugue notamment en S. Gervaix auquel lieu y a des gens bien debauches combien quilz debvroient gagner du iour la iournee pour vivre a cause de leur pauvrete: dont requierent proveoir a ce que les choses bien commencees ne retombent en decadence." R.C., Vol. 51, fol. 61.

[70] Sources du Droit, III, no. 1015. 6 April 1562, pro-

These laws, like all laws in Geneva, were enforced upon rich and poor alike, in fact, only the rich could reasonably be expected to over-eat, though from time to time there were complaints about even chambermaids dressing in such manner that social condition was difficult to tell. Many laws began with words of warning, "that no one, of whatever state or condition he may be, should dare or be so bold...."[71] The sumptuary laws were applied to rich and poor, habitant and members of the Council--with refreshing blindness. Monter remarks: "The point which does emerge clearly from the available evidence is that the Genevan sumptuary laws were enforced with commendable impartiality; the hand of justice fell on those of high and low estate alike."[72]

Nor were they enforced as harshly as similar laws in France at the same period. The French parlement in 1559 had the same concern, but more draconic means of enforcement:

> It denied to artisans the wearing of 'slashed hose and puffed taffeta on pain of being taken and

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hibits anyone's playing at a game in the streets or public places on the days in which the Cène is celebrated, in order "that each may employ himself that day to meditate the graces of God toward us." Ibid., II, no. 850, indicates that the day for the shooting tournament was the third Sunday after Easter. This was a high, festive occasion for Geneva. 2 August 1548.

[71] Sources du Droit, III, nos. 885, 902, 907, 908, 909, et passim.

[72] Monter, p. 68.

strangled.'[73]

Nor was this law unique. Calvinism did entail a certain rigor, but except for a few slips, did not go beyond the possibility of performance or enforcement--both of these being necessary for any equitable law.

These laws will come up for examination again in Chapter IV when we examine less favorable aspects of Calvin's influence on economy and society, but some tentative evaluation should be made here before we leave them. The intent of the laws was good--thrift, not for its own sake, but because of poverty and scandal to the poor. The basic concern was the elimination of the conspicuous consumption so detrimental to a society with many have-nots, such as Geneva's refugees. But the methods taken were not always consistent with privacy and what would today be regarded as the right of a person to be himself, at least at home. Then, of course, there is always the problem of putting oneself into another century, or another culture. I find it easy to sympathize with the Council when it forbade (and forbade and forbade!) mixed bathing in the public bathhouses, les estuves.[74] But a Swede or a

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[73]Zeller, Les Institutions de la France au XVI[e] Siècle, p. 21.

[74]e.g. Opera, 21, p. 308. 5 March 1543. "Ordained that the men ought not to go to bathe with the women, nor the women with the men, and also that each man and woman should be separate unless they be joined in marriage and therefore

Polynesian might regard such a view as prudish in the extreme.

One of the so-called Protestant virtues (cold-blooded, rather than warm) is thrift. Since that virtue has always been enjoined to Christians, it is difficult to see why it should be particularly Protestant. But certainly these laws meant to inculcate that virtue, at least as a by-product, and such virtue may lead to the Wesleyan dilemma: thrift leads to wealth and wealth to irreligion. Whether the latter half is necessarily so is disputable. But that savings do lead to capital is not so disputable. So the sumptuary laws constitute a small fact in the argument that Calvinism led the western world to Capitalism.[75]

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able to sleep together, but not to bathe, and to make commandment to the estuviers." So even husband and wife could not bathe together, though the awkward wording makes one wonder if the secretary didn't start to write one thing and end up writing another. Such bathing regulations were brought up occasionally, and usually dealt with mixed bathing, "a scandalous thing among the faithful." R.C., Vol. 36, fol. 26. We read later complaints in May 1548, March 1558. One citation contained a complaint that two of the pastors went "nud a nud" to the baths with one Huguenne and her sister. They were later deposed. Opera, 21, 367. 11 January 1546. R.C., Vol. 40, fol. 345.

[75]So Max Weber in his Chapter, "Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism," The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribner Paperback, 1958), p. 155-183. His famous misquotation of John Wesley: "we must exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and to save all they can; that is, in effect, to grow rich," leaving out "give all you can" till the next page, is found on page 175.

D. Usury

In the first chapter we did not argue that Calvin's fame in regard to the usury controversy lay in his business acumen, but in his willingness to attack Aristotle head-on (as merchants had been doing in practice for a good many centuries), and to read the Bible with understanding, ignoring medieval interpretation. But on the practical level it can be argued that Calvin was involved in every dispute and edict from 1544 till long after his death, when Theodore Beza applied the coup de grace to the public bank in 1580. The latter action, in a real sense, was as much Calvin's doing as the first edicts after his second arrival in the city.

The city's franchises, authorized by the Bishop of Geneva in 1378--in which were confirmed and explained the liberties, franchises, immunities, ways and customs of the city--enforced and confirmed articles not only favorable to usury, but even to professional money lenders.[76] Article XXXIV reads:

> Concerning those who die without making a will: that if any cleric, citizen, juror or inhabitant of the said city dies without a will, whether he be an open usurer or not, bastard or otherwise, whatever he may be or whatever condition, the children that he may have shall be his heirs.[77]

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[76]Paul E. Martin, "Calvin et le pret à intéret à Genève," Melanges...Antony Babel, I, 251-263, p. 252.

[77]Ibid., p. 253. "De ceux qui trepassent sans faire

Article XXXV protected the right of an open usurer to make a will; Article XXXIX prohibited seizing the goods of a usurer, dead or alive, or molesting or disquieting him by making inventory of his goods; and Article LXXVII summed up the protection given to the usurer so completely--no one was allowed even to argue with a usurer about his profession!--that there is little room for doubt about the city's position: money-lending was so important to the economy of fourteenth-century Geneva that the usurer was protected in the statutes for the present and for the future.

In 1444 those parts of Bishop Fabri's city charter which protected bastards, usurers and their heirs were suppressed by Pope Felix V. However, usury itself was not suppressed, for in 1485--during the period when fairs were still strong in Geneva--there is an example of taking interest on a loan at 5% from fair to fair, a real interest of 20%.[78] After the Reformation, January 1538, the Council of Two Hundred noted that poor people were borrowing money from renevoz (an obscure term used then for usurers) and paying an undefined, but oppressive, rate of interest, and ordered that all rates

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de testament.--Item que se aulcun clerc, citoyen, juré ou habitant de la dite cité meurt sans testament, ou soit usurier public ou non, bastart ou aultre, quelqu'il soit ou de quelle condition, les enfants qu'il aura soient ses heritiers....

[78]Martin, p. 254.

be reduced to 5%.[79] This took place shortly before the February election which brought the Artichauds to power and led to the dismissal of Calvin and Farel in April of that year. There is no evidence that Calvin had anything to do with this decision.

But in 1543, after his return to Geneva, Calvin plunged head first into the usury problem (this was the same year he wrote his letter to Sachinus). The problem was a serious one from the pastors' point of view.

> Usurers. Concerning which the preachers have made good remonstrances that the great usury which reigns in Geneva should be looked into. Ordered that this should be set in order, and that it should be taken up with M. Calvin in order to look into it.[80]

The upshot of the affair was that on 24 December 1543, the Small Council ordered that interest could no longer be taken in kind (thus protecting the farmer) and must be reduced to 5%.[81] Thus Calvin's concern was translated into direct appeal to the state, and the state acknowledged that this was a proper sphere of pastoral concern.

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[79] Martin, 254. Sources du Droit, II, 343,4.

[80] Martin, 256. Not in Opera annals. "Usures. Sur ce que les predicans hont faicte bonnes remonstrances qu'il soyt advise sus la gran usure que regne in Genève. Ordonne qu'il soyt mis ordre sus cella et qu'il en soyt parle à Monsieur Calvin, pour en adviser devant." R.C., Vol. 38, fol.10.

[81] Sources du Droit, II, no. 812. "Ordonné que tous reneves, tan blé que vin et aultres choses, soyent reduyctes à cinq pour cent." Professor Kingdon thinks this means only

But the definitive legal action by the Council, one that would stand for a dozen years, was taken in 1544. This time the decision was made, not by the Small Council and Two Hundred alone, but by all the bourgeoisie meeting as the General Council.

> ...concerning which judgment by the said Seigneurie [of the Small Council and the Two Hundred], the General Council ratifying, that which has been arrived at in the Council of Two Hundred, namely that from this time on none should dare, no matter how bold, of placing money at usury nor in any way in order to have a gain of more than five per cent per year, and that concerning this there should be made a most ample declaration which ought to be done by Messieurs of the Small Council, to make some public proclamations concerning this as they may think expedient.[82]

Martin believes that this definitive action was inspired by the pastors, Calvin en tête.[83] Since it came after Calvin had preached through Deuteronomy--the sermons so full of social and economic concern--his judgment seems reasonable.

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that if taken in kind, the cash equivalent must not exceed 5%.

[82] Sources du Droit, III, no. 816. "Icy a esté mis en avant l'affaire des usures et le mode comme l'on en doibt user, suyvant ce que az este par cy devant proposé en conseilz Estroyt et Deux Cent. Surquoy advisé par lesdicts seigrs conseilz General ratiffiant ce qu'a este conclufz en conseilz de Deux Cent, asavoir que de heure en avant nulz ne soyt hose ne si ardy de prester argent à usure ny aultrement pour en avoir de gaing plus de cinq pour centz, et que sus cella soyt faicte declairation plus amplez laquelle se debvra faire par messrs du Petit conseilz, et sur ce faire cries comme ilz verront estre espedientz." 19 February 1544.

[83] Martin, p. 257

The next action of the city government seems to me to have been aimed, not so much at the lender, but at the borrower. It came in the Ecclesiastical Ordinances for the country parishes, passed by Council, 17 May 1547.

> Let no one lend at usury or for profit higher than five per cent, under penalty of confiscation of the principal, and of being assessed an arbitrary fine according to the requirements of the case.[84]

The country parishes were peasant, almost entirely. Landowners were more apt to live in Geneva than on their holdings, and the chatelains for the city (since most of the land seems to have been city-controlled) ordinarily lived in the city, and were therefore already subject to the city's usury laws passed in 1544. Only the pastors lived in the rural areas, and while they may on occasion have lent money at interest--as we shall see--the edict was surely not aimed at them, they already being forbidden to lend at usurious rates. It seems, then, that either this was merely an attempt to keep the rural areas consistent with the city in legal matters, or a warning to peasants not to borrow at usury, as lenders had already been warned not to lend at usurious rates, i.e. over 5 per cent.

Except for one case of usury among the clergy, there is a hiatus in the records for ten years. The pastoral cul-

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[84] Sources du Droit, II, no. 841.

prit was Philip de Ecclesia, who had come to Geneva shortly after Calvin returned. Several years later he was "exiled" to Vandoeuvres, and soon came to be known as friend to such enemies of Calvin as Jerome Bolsec, who had been exiled after arguing predestination cogently with Calvin. When the pastors were not able to procure the demission of Ecclesia by appealing to his heretical views and incorrigible nature, they added to the other charges the one of usury.[85] In the 1541 Ordonnances usury is listed as one of "the vices ...intolerable in a pastor." So in addition to heresy, mistreatment of his wife and companionship with Bolsec, de Ecclesia was removed for usury. Whether it was of equal importance to heresy seems doubtful, but that it was considered important is clear.

Calvin's next brush with usury did not take place till 1 July 1557. That day he appeared before the Council to relate the Consistory's concern that usurers not remain unpunished--which indicates to us that some were able to thumb their noses at the law. The 9th of August he came to com-

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[85]This trial can be followed in Opera, 21, 448-450, 509, and (better) in Reg. Comp. Pasteurs, I, 47, 56 and 57, 76, 132-148. Beginning in 1549, he hung on till 1553 when he was deposed, and Nicholas Collodon took his place. Whether the Council simply wanted to thwart Calvin, or was friendly to de Ecclesia, or knew it could not get another pastor at the ridiculously low salaries paid, is difficult to know. In the next chapter we shall see that at least one pastor got away with usury.

plain about one "Pierre Mercier, accused of excessive interest-taking." The latter was judged guilty and fined two weeks later.[86] But all the law-making in the world cannot completely ignore the economic facts of life. Obviously lending at interest was going on, as permitted by law; but just as obviously the 5% rate was getting cavalier treatment. So the Small Council appointed a committee of Seigneurie seated on the Chambre des Comptes,[87] together with avocats, savants and ministres in order "to discuss the matter fully in order to do something right."[88]

The final result was a new edict on usury, 12 November 1557, and its most outstanding advances (if one agrees that they were advances) were the raising of the rate of interest to 6.67 per year, and a frank recognition that those with money to lend were refusing to lend it at the old rate.

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[86]Martin, 258. Some of this information is in Opera, 21, 668, but Martin has dug deeper into the unpublished Registres du Conseil than the Strassbourg editors.

[87]Monter has done the definitive work so far on the little-known Chambre des Comptes. It was set up soon after independence in 1536 and was presided over by one of the four Syndics. It acted as a clearing-house for all fiscal transactions of the city, signed the mandements with which Geneva's public debts were paid and surveyed the books of the treasurer, granary superintendent and others on public works. "It centralized Geneva's finances in an age when such centralization was still uncommon." p. 15, 16.

[88]Martin, p. 258, quoting from R.C., Vol. 53, fol. 338.

Consequently, runs the edict, in order to give some rule and limitation and "to obviate for the future the frauds which are committed by excessive usuries to the ruin and destruction of many," this new ruling was made.[89]

The recognition that some had idle (oisif et inutile) money which they had no ability or opportunity to use, which "they may give to others more able and with better means and industry in order to trade for an honest profit," and that such people were not grubbing Shylocks, but people who needed such an opportunity "to help in their strong necessities to lend in good conscience,"--such recognition was a long step toward the modern world. Martin comments:

> It seems incontestable that in raising the rate of interest, as in authorizing interest on agreed loans--not only to those who have need of it for their affairs, but also to those who give their idle money to other well-off persons who will use it honestly in their commerce and industry--the operations of lending at interest are extended and developed. It does not deal any longer with lending for production or enterprise, but of that which proceeds from it, of lending money, capital, which will procure a profit for the lender.[90]

This would seem to be another indication that the real world will break in from time to time and disturb the status quo. If real evil is involved then the intrusion must be fought;

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[89] Sources du Droit, III, no. 953, "Conditions des prets à interets." Pour quinze, one-fifteenth, was the new ceiling, i.e. 6 2/3%.

[90] Martin, 260.

but if lending money at interest is not in itself evil (and Calvin had so argued), and if an over-restrictive rate simply creates a blackmarket for exorbitant loans to those who need it for business expansion or slow periods (and this seems to have been the case), then one would have to argue that this was a step forward, not backward. It was to obviate the subterfuges with which Europe was plagued at the time, to keep rates within limits, to make sure that all lending was public, and true rates were known,[91] and to protect the borrowers from financial ruin, that the edict was proclaimed. If there be virtue in playing the ostrich, then the ministers were remiss in initiating the study that led to this edict. What we have here are Calvin's theories in actual practice in the Genevan marketplace.[92]

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[91] Sources du Droit, p. 49. "...en tous contractz de prest d'argent à cense ou profict y aura serment expres de la somme vrayement receue." Translation: "...in all contracts of lending money for rent-income or profit there will be a precise declaration of the true amount received." à cense, I believe, is equivalent to Zinskauf.

[92] It should be noted here that Martin does not agree that this reflects Calvin's influence, because "in the present case there is only record that the advice of men of affairs in the stream of commerce and the circulation of money, ...the opinion of Calvin or the ministers not being cited." p. 260. It seems to me that since the committee to study the matter was to include ministers (which meant Calvin, above all) and there is no indication that the edict published a month and a half later met with their disapproval, then we must conclude that they accepted the necessity for new regulations without murmur. Had Calvin complained, we would surely know of it!

There is another indication that Calvin's views were influential in this edict. It is clear from our discussion of his views on usury that he distinguished the lending of idle money to one who could use it well (lending for enterprise or production), from lending money in cases of need, where the return of the loan ought to be without interest. The first was part of the new economy which had been growing for hundreds of years, and which he was the first theologian to understand with any clarity. The second was throat-cutting, sucking the blood of the poor--the evil scored in Deuteronomy, the evil which the monti di pieta tried to overcome in Italy by lending to the poor at low rates. Most of this edict deals with the former. But one paragraph prohibits the common practice of lending money to one having grain or fruit yet green, with the agreement that at harvest time the farmer will pay back in kind (wheat, wine, etc.) at the harvest rate. This meant that instead of receiving a relatively low amount of, say, wheat, which was dear in the spring, the lender will receive a large amount in the fall when wheat is cheap. The edict specifically prohibits this practice and was repeated in December of that same year, 1557. It stipulates that the value set must be at what the produce will be worth at harvest time, that these hypothetical prices agreed on must be reasonable, and expressly notes that if a notable excess is

charged it will be reduced.[93] Thus was set up a powerful protective device against anyone who would gouge the peasant, who needed money desperately in spring or summer, only to see his produce flow into the hands of the sharper who lent him money in order to harvest his crops. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why Monter could write:

> ...nearly all the local peasants seemed to be far more favorably disposed to the Genevan government than to their own. This seems to be an impressive tribute to the careful and generally honest fashion in which Messieurs treated their rural subjects, and perhaps even more a consequence of the comparative lightness of Genevan taxation, which did not burden its peasants with an annual taille as did the reorganized Savoyard state after 1560.[94]

Calvin died in May of 1564. But his influence in this area continued, particularly in the person of his friend and successor, Theodore Beza. An extraordinary session of the Council was called on 10 December 1565, concerned with

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[93] Sources du Droit, nos. 953 and 957. The former reads: "Item ne sera permis bailler et prester argent soubz colleur et conventions d'achepter bled ou vin estant encores pendant en herbe, ou soit en fonds et possessions et à recuillir, synon à la charge d'y mettre le prix selon que le bled ou vin vauldra au temps de la cueille d'iceulx; et que les achaptz des fruictz et prises et les ypothecques se feront à priz raisonnables; et s'il y a excès notable, comme du tiers plus, seront reduictes à la raison du dict profict d'argent, comme dessus dict est."

[94] Monter, p. 82. The statement about taxation, while not my concern here, is a propos to a discussion of the way the city republic treated its rural holdings. Paternalistic, yes; but fair.

usury alone. Evidently those whose business made it necessary for them to borrow or lend, on occasion, in France and Italy were involved in dealings where the interest rate was higher than Geneva's, and a special committee of savants had suggested that the legal rate be set at one-twelfth, or 8 1/3 per cent.[95] Three of the magistrates, among them Michel Roset, were asked to discuss the matter with Beza. Although at the session the action had been not to allow such a raise, Beza discussed this in his report and condemned any raise which would enrich merchants, weigh-down the poor, and contribute to the dearness of the times. But he admitted that those who traded in Lyon and Venice were faced with a separate situation and that their conscience should not be troubled by enforcing the local rate in foreign places where the interest rate was higher. Indeed, lending to merchants "who know very well how to make their profit," could be at a higher rate than the pour quinze set in 1557; but lending "for other affairs and for need" was restricted to the old level. (Martin thinks this meant 5%) It is interesting that the final Council discussion specifically mentions Calvin:

> After many long discussions it has been ordered to hold to the preceding Edicts, which are reasonable and severe enough, which also the late Monsieur Calvin, when he was asked, had found good, without

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[95]Martin, p. 261.

> changing anything. Yet this does not mean to punish those who will exceed by one [per cent?] or a little more, especially when they lend to merchants.[96]

The last indication of Calvin's influence came with the establishing of a city-owned bank in Geneva. In 1551 the Council had established a special financial institution, l'Arche, which collected certain taxes--e.g. the gabelle on wheat and wine--in order to debasle the city, to pay off the long-standing debt to Basel. Like Topsy it grew and became a privy treasury and after 1567 expended more funds than the public treasury.[97] Finally, in 1568, the Council established a public bank with new funds borrowed from Basel at 5% for the Arche, charging 10% annual interest, or 2 1/2% per quarter.[98] The pastors were never happy with this bank which could charge more than the legal rate and made numerous complaints about its excessive usury, the debauched to whom it loaned, and the scandalously large sums loaned. In 1571 Beza defended the bank's interest rates by comparing them to a tax, but closed his defense before the Council by noting that all scandals in Geneva soon became "huge as mountains" to the rest of the world and recommended the bank be terminated as soon as pos-

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[96]Martin, p. 262. Martin fails to cite the volume and folio this extract is taken from.

[97]Monter, 22, 23.

[98]Monter, 29; André E. Sayous, "La Banque à Genève pendant les XVI^e^, XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ Siècles," Revue Économique Internationale (September, 1934), p. 437-474. p. 443.

sible.[99] It was not, but its rates were lowered to 8 1/3 percent, an amount approved by the pastors at a meeting where the opinions of the "late M. Calvin" were discussed.[100]

The bank went from trouble to more trouble; Pierre Chappuis, the man appointed changeur managed to loan but never recover the loans and Monter's discussion makes it sound more like a charity than a bank. Finally Chappuis was sent to prison by the Council for his mismanagement and misappropriations. An attempt was then made to re-establish the bank, but the pastors, alarmed at the 10% rate proposed, managed to get the Two Hundred to bury the proposal on 7 March 1580. A few weeks later Beza killed the proposal by saying that such a bank had produced abuses in such places as Venice, Paris and Lyons, and that if the bank were re-established, "people would say that at Geneva everyone is a banker, an odious thing."[101] Perhaps to the usual calvinistic concern for fair regulations, one should add here a parallel concern that someone might be looking. Geneva was, indeed, in Tawney's phrase, a "city of glass."

A long summary to this discussion of usury practices and regulations in Geneva is hardly necessary. There may be

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[99]Monter, 30-32. [100]Ibid., p. 32.

[101]Monter, 32-37; Sayous, 445.

some legitimate division over how much Calvin or the other pastors influenced the state, but that the interest and influence were there is incontestable. The pastors had no desire to escape a world of borrowers and lenders; they thought themselves capable of discussing rates of interest, payment in kind, and public lending agencies, and often got quick action. In our day when church concern has usually expressed itself solely in attempting to deny beer permits to local restaurants, how impressive to see the pastors argue about and then kill the public bank! We read today that "among the greatest gaps in existing antipoverty efforts is the failure to provide financial-legal services for people who have neither the education nor the money to protect themselves."[102] The poor of Geneva had part of the answer to that in Calvin and the Consistory.

E. Marriage

Marriage, in the western world, has usually been an amphibian institution, partly the concern of the state and partly the church. In this area, as in others, we see in Geneva a movement from almost total state control to one where church and state shared concern in a complex arrangement. The

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[102]Sylvia Porter, Detroit Free Press, December 30, 1964, p. 6-B.

1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances make clear that the Council believed marriage to be its concern.

> With regard to differences in matrimonial cases, because it is not a spiritual matter but involved with civil affairs, we remit these to their Lordships (messieurs), desiring them nevertheless to be willing to set up a Consistory without delay to judge in such matters, to which, if it seem good to them, there could be joined some ministers as counsellors.[103]

But Calvin was not satisfied, and by the end of 1545 had worked out a marriage ordinance, although there is indication that the Council was not willing to be bound by this project.[104] While this project does not clearly distinguish the spiritual and temporal realms in the case of marriage, it does admit that there is some distinction. At the very end, Calvin wrote:

> All matrimonial causes concerning the union of persons and not of goods should be carried first to the Consistory, and there, if some amiable agreement is able to be made, it will be made in the name of God. If it be necessary to pronounce some juridical sentence, the parties should then be sent to the Council with a declaration of the Consistory's recommendation in order to give a definitive sentence there.[105]

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[103] Calvin: Theological Treatises, p. 67. Since we cannot imagine Calvin denying this was a spiritual matter, we must assume this was one of the changes the pastors were not allowed to see before the Ordonnances were passed.

[104] Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs, I, 30f., contains an undated Ordonnance which was probably adopted in 1546 or 1547--though proof for this is lacking. The 1545 project is found in Opera, 10a, 33-44. The differences between the two are very small.

[105] Opera, Xa, 44. "Que toutes causes matrimonialles

The fact that Calvin was knowledgeable in law makes the problem of the separation of the two realms even more sticky than had he been merely a pastor with a passion for social righteousness. But here Calvin the 'lawyer' and pastor showed that he distinguished the two areas--the church's concern and the concern of the state. That one advised and influenced the other is undeniable. He would not have considered this wrong.

In the later Ordonnances sur les Mariages we see again Calvin's concern not only for decency and order, but also for the Word of God, and for that basic equality between men and women which has been partially restored in Christ.[106] The couple standing before the minister just before the sermon to take their vows were taking a serious step, one of intense concern, not only for themselves, but also for the church and the republic. That every possible aid to the success of that relationship be theirs, and every eventuality taken care of in case of failure, was the intent of the ordinance. We shall look at several of its features.

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concernant la conioinction personnelle et non pas les biens soient traictées en premiere instance au Consistoire, et que là s'il se peult faire appointement amyable il se face au nom de Dieu. S'il est requis de prononcer quelque sentence iuridique, que les parties soient renvoyées au Conseil avec declaration de l'advis du Consistoire, pour là en donner sentence difinitive."

[106] Supra, p. 13.

The first striking freedom evident in the document was the concern that those who marry do so of their own free will. This is at variance with the picture we usually have of that period when wills, dowries and inheritances often made marriage such a serious concern, politically and financially, that in many places arranged marriages were the rule. Here, such arrangements are recognized as quite legitimate, but not against the will of the partners. Article 8 reads:

> That no father may force his children into whatever marriage may seem good to him without their good pleasure and consent, but that the son or daughter who may not wish to accept the party which the father may wish to give him, may excuse himself, retaining modesty and reverance always, and the refusal will not entail any punishment by the father; the same will be observed for those under guardianship.[107]

The article immediately preceding underlines the same thing: the dowry must be paid even when a couple of age (20 and 18) marry without parental consent, if the marriage was legally made and contracted "because of the negligence or over-rigor of their parents," then the dowry or financial settlement must be "as if they had consented."[108]

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[107] Reg. Comp. Pasteurs, I, 30. "Que nul pere n'ait à contraindre ses enfans à tel mariage que bon luy semblera sinon de leur bon gre et consentement, mais que celluy ou celle qui ne vouldroit point accepter la partie que son pere luy vouldroit donner s'en puisse excuser gardant tousjours modestie et reverence sans que pour tel refuz le pere luy en face aucune punition; le semblable sera observe en ceulz qui sont en curatelle."

[108] Ibid.

The second, and more striking, freedom written into the marriage laws was the freedom of the woman from the onerous double standard which had been practiced in Christendom from time immemorial. The regulation we are concerned with comes under the general heading, "Causes for which a marriage may be annuled."

> Although from antiquity the right of the woman has not been equal to that of her husband in case of divorce, since according to the witness of the apostle the obligation is mutual and reciprocal pertaining to the marital bed, and because in that the wife is not more subject to her husband than the husband to the wife; if a man is convicted of adultery and the wife demands to be separated from him, it should be granted her as well, unless by good admonitions one is able to reconcile them. Nevertheless, if the wife should fall into adultery by the obvious blame of her husband, or the husband by the fault of the wife, so that both are culpable, or if it is verified that some deceit has been committed tending toward divorce, in this case they are not allowed to request it.[109]

This is a good illustration of the mutual regard and basic equality which Calvin saw to have been true originally and to

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[109] Ibid., I, p. 35. "Combien qu'enciennement le droict de la femme n'ayt point este esgal à celluy du mary en cas de divorce, puis que selon le tesmoignage de l'apostre l'obligation est mutuelle et reciprocque quant à la cohabitation du lict et qu'en cela la femme n'est point plus subjecte au mary que le mary à la femme, si ung homme est convaincu d'adultere et que la femme demande à estre separee de luy, qu'il luy soit aussi bien octroyé, sinon que par bonnes admonitions on les peult reconcilier ensemble. Toutesfoys si la femme estoit tombee en adultere par la coulpe evidente du mary ou le mary par la coulpe de la femme tellement que tous deux feussent coulpablees ou qu'il se verifiast quelque fraude qui eust esté faict tendant affin de divorce, en ce cas ilz ne seront recevables à le demander.

be partially reconstituted in Christ. It also illustrates the fact that Calvin was concerned with legality, not for its own sake, but for the sake of harmonious human relationships, as well as the honor of God. Pure legalism would never have taken into the account the blame of the "innocent" party in a marriage disrupted by adultery.

One has the impression that Genevan morality was not exceptionally high despite Calvin's preaching, and that couples were not above that same deceit practiced in England today where the accusation of adultery is necessary to obtain divorce. This was perhaps why the deceit (fraude) clause was written into the ordinance. On 31 October 1548, François Favre, father-in-law to Ami Perrin, came to the Consistory to demand a divorce on the grounds of adultery, but (so Calvin thought) more likely for financial reasons. Because François also admitted to adultery, Calvin argued that the divorce might just as well be granted her, and warned the pastors that the whole thing might be a case of collusion between the two. The outcome is not discussed, so it is not clear how this was worked out, except it must have been one of the many causes of friction between Calvin and the Favre family.[110]

The concern for the wife's rights went so far as to make sure she was not mistreated by her husband.

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[110] Ibid., I, p. 41.

> If it be known that a husband treats his wife badly, beating and tormenting her, or that he threatens to outrage her in some manner, or he is known to have an unbridled temper, that he be sent before the Council in order that express prohibitions be made against beating her, under certain punishment.[111]

However, there is no indication that wife-beating was added to adultery and desertion (which seems to have presumed adultery) as grounds for divorce. Adultery was an obvious reason, since biblical; desertion not so obvious to us today, perhaps, although a discussion with welfare workers or assistant county attorneys will generally show that the problem is still with us to an astonishing degree. The absence of a husband for seven years was sufficient to give a woman grounds for re-marriage, evidently on the assumption that he was dead. Abondonment par debauchement or some other evil affection in such a way that he could not be reached was grounds for divorce.

The marriage contract--even before the ceremony--was considered binding if made seriously before two witnesses. This did not mean drinking promises, as is evident from the claim against Jean de la Forest by the daughter of Berthod de Satigny. She claimed before the Consistory that Jean had

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[111] Opera, Xa, 40. "Si on cognoit qu'un mary traicte mal sa femme, la battant et tourmentant, ou qu'il la menasse de luy faire quelque oultrage et qu'on le cognoisse comme de cholere desordonnee, qu'il soit renvoye par devant le Conseil, pour luy faire deffenses expresses de ne la battre, soub certaine punition."

promised to marry her. He denied it, saying they had been drinking together and that she toasted him in the nom de mariage, but he did not respond. The Consistory must have enjoyed their joke of sending the couple to the Council "in order to make them drink a little water," i.e. probably prescribing three days in jail on bread and water. The promise of marriage was declared null.[112] But if the promise was a serious one, breaking it was extremely difficult. We saw earlier that Philibert Berthelier ran afoul of that regulation when an attempt was made to break a marriage contract between him and Jeanne Pignon because her fortune was not what he had supposed.[113] This was the beginning of the influential Berthelier's fight with the Consistory and Calvin, which finally led to his exile and the beheading of his brother. The Consistory sent the case to the Council with a negative recommendation, and on 27 August 1548, the Council decreed that the promise of marriage would not be broken.[114] Whether such a decision was to the interest of the two parties is not clear; but that such a contract was binding, thus removing the temptation to easy promises on the part of some, is evident.

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[112] Opera, 21, 780. Reg. du Consistoire.

[113] Supra,

[114] Opera, 21, 432,3. R.C., Vol. 43, fol. 177.

Other actions in the area of sexual morality were about what we would expect. Adulterers were not allowed to marry.[115] A 1547 edict notes that no punishment has been given to "women pregnant by fornication" (femmes grosses par palliardisses) because they can't be sent to jail in that condition, and certainly not after delivery, so something had to be done. The result was that they had to appear at worship on Sunday at the great sermon (second sermon on Sunday morning) and "cry mercy to God and to justice, so that they repent of their sins."[116] Another problem had to do with those who contracted marriage but fornicated together before the ceremony. Calvin and Beza both proposed to the Council that when such couples came to the church for the ceremony "that the minister make public declaration of their fault which they ought also to recognize in order to undo the scandal."[117] Four months later the penalty against fornication was raised from six days on bread and water to nine days, plus a fine; if they tumbled in a second time, then besides that penalty they had to appear in church before the sermon

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[115] Opera, 10a, p. 38. The 1545 Project; also in Reg. Comp. Pasteurs, I, p.

[116] Sources du Droit, II, no. 845. "Punition des femmes grosses par paillardise," 19 September 1547.

[117] Ibid., III, no. 1042. 22 November 1563.

and make reparation.[118] It would seem that community pressure was the main censure in this case, a punishment that depended a great deal on community consensus. No doubt the spirit of Calvin influenced that consensus a great deal as the years went on.

Choisy's conclusion on the subject of marriage under Calvin is the best summation I have seen.

> This legislation raises some serious objections today, because it consecrates the intrusion of the public powers in private matters, the usage of physical constraint in an area that ought to be removed from that, and finally the complete absence of religious liberty. But it is penetrated by a powerful spirit of morality, the law is put to the service of the Christian ethic (morale), all the prescriptions have for an end the purifying of morals in lifting the institution of marriage, in making the importance of holiness felt, in giving to the family--basic to the social order--a solid organization. It is, with the school and the calvinist diaconate, one of the better elements of the theocratic system, one of the most happy applications of the principal of the authority of the Word of God.[119]

To this I would only object that all societies have considered marriage something more than simply a private matter, hence public powers have always intruded, and therefore this legislation surely cannot be regarded as a consecration of this intrusion. The strict separation of private and public, like spiritual and temporal, has never been possible. That some

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[118] Ibid., III, no. 1946. 23 March 1564.

[119] Choisy, p. 249, 250.

attempt to demarcate was made is an effort attributable to Calvin's training in both canon and Roman law. The attempt to enforce ecclesiastical censure by the temporal sword, however, presents more difficulty.

F. Education

André Biéler does not dwell on Calvin's influence in the field of education--possibly because to do so would be to indulge in "what every schoolboy knows" in Geneva. And certainly interest in education, while part of a rounded picture of social concern, was common to all the Reformers and to the subsequent Catholic Reformation as well. The situation in Geneva illustrates well the concern of the early Protestants, and the success of the Collège de Genève points up their success in the educational venture.

The firecracker for Reform in Geneva was William Farel, himself trained and nourished in the humanist center at Meaux in France, which revolved about the reforming (but never Reformed) bishop Briçonnet. It was not strange, then, that the meeting of General Council on 21 May 1536, which abolished the mass and established the Reformation, should also include a concern for education.

> Here [at the meeting of the General Council] the article concerning the schools was proposed and on this matter by the same vote it was revolved that one try to have a learned man do that [i.e., teach], and that he be paid so that he might nourish and teach the

> poor without asking anything of them for salary, and also that each person be bound to send his children to the school and to make them learn [sic!], and all scholars and also pedagogues ought to be obligated to go to make their residence at the great school [i.e., public school] where the rector and his bachelors will be.[120]

There are at least three very interesting items here: first, that the tie between Reformation and education was so close that of all the institutions that might have been mentioned here--the church or the hospital, for instance--only the school is treated; next, that this education was free to the poor at city expense; finally, that it was compulsory. The school itself was directed by rector Antoine Saunier and classes met at the former monastery de Rive. Its aims were quite modest, seeking to inculcate only grammar of the ancient trivium. Saunier was forced to leave the city shortly after Calvin and Farel for refusing to obey Council's wishes in the matter of public worship. After Calvin's return, the 'heterodox' Sébastien Castellion was rector from 1541-1544.

Upon Calvin's return the Church Ordinances were writ-

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[120] Opera, 21, 202. "Icy est aussy este propose larticle des escolles et sur jcelluy par une mesme voix est resolu que lon taische a avoir homme a cela faire scavant et que lon le sallarie tellement quil puysse nurrir et enseigner les paovres sans leur rien demander de sallaire et aussy que chescung soit tenu envoyer ses enfans a lescholle et les faire apprendre et tous escolliers et aussi pedagoges soyent tenus aller faire la residence a la grande escolle ou sera le Recteur et ses bachelliers." R.C., Vol. 29, fol. 112.

ten and (in the main) passed by the Councils. The copy found in the Registers of the Company of Pastors contains an introduction not found in the official Ordonnances Ecclesiastiques, in which the immediate institutional consequences of of the gospel proclamation are seen to be church, school and hospital.

> ...So that the doctrine of the Holy Gospel and our Lord should be preserved in its purity and the Christian Church duly maintained, that in the future the youth should be faithfully instructed, [and] the hospital set up in good condition for the support of the poor....[121]

Indeed, such was the importance of education in Geneva, that the only major construction in the city during Calvin's life there--except for defensive fortifications and road building--was the College, begun in 1558 and finished in 1563.[122] Monter, who is critical of the republic for taking in more revenue from traditional ecclesiastical sources than it spent on reformed ecclesiastical institutions, admits that this was not true after the founding of the College a few years after the Calvinists defeated the Perrinists.

> Here, too, however, Geneva's situation changed later in the century, principally after the foundation of

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[121] Reg. Comp. Pasteurs, I, p. "...que la doctrine de sainct Evangile de nostre seigneur soit bien conservee en sa purete et lesglise chrestienne deuement entretenue, que la ieunesse pour ladvenir soit fidellement instruicte, lhospital ordonne en bon estat pour la sustentation des pauvres...."

[122] Histoire de Genève, p. 225.

> Calvin's Academy in 1559 had added a large annual charge to the budget which could not be balanced by any substantial additions of revenue.[123]

We saw that in the beginning education was provided for those who could not pay, and that it was compulsory. This continued. Every once in a while there was a notice concerning the appointment of a schoolmaster for the hospital, where were lodged the poor and orphans. We note also that it was the job of the hospitaller to work with the procureurs to find apprenticeships for the boys and places of service for the girls at the hospital--an indication that such education was what we would term elementary.[124] That this education continued to be compulsory can be seen when the compulsion was extended to the villages in the Fall of 1561. The pastor at Jussy, Jean Pinaut, complained to the Council

> ...that the children of the subjects at Jussy do not go to catechism nor even to school, so that if there is not a remedy, there will be a great barbarity and God will call us to account for it.[125]

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[123] Monter, p. 20. I disagree, however, with Monter on his criticism of the city's spending habits prior to 1559. From his own figures for 1544, I note 7,006 florins received from traditional ecclesiastical sources and 6,195 paid out, a difference of only 3% of the budget, and this does not count pensions to six priests totaling at least 600 florins, which would be counted as charity.

[124] Sources du Droit, III, no. 905. 12 May 1553

[125] Roget, VI, 188, 189 has the whole account.

Michel Roset and Calvin were appointed to check into the situation, and after the report Roset was sent to Peney and Jussy to assemble and harangue the people about their nonchalance and to exhort them to do better. The city offered its help in increasing the wages of the teachers, and levied a fine of five sous upon any subject who did not send his child to school, unless there was some reason known to the chatelain.

An amusing example indicates to us that nothing was too small for Calvin's attention in this matter of education. In 1551 he came to the Council with the complaint that a scholar named Collongnies was shooting a peashooter in school, evidently at the teaching bachelors. The Council solemnly prohibited such extra-curricular activity and appointed the Syndic Chamois to separate the scholars.[126]

The main educational enterprise for the small city, however, came in 1559 with the establishment of the College of Geneva. This university's genesis in Geneva owed its transfer from Lausanne to Calvin's concern for freedom of the

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[126] Opera, 21, 480. 11 May 1551. "Ayant entendu la requeste de S^r Calvin aussi les remonstrances icy faictes a cause de ce que Collongnies et aultres ioyent a lescolle a la sarbacanne parmi les clers [bacheliers?] requerant il avoir advis etc. Arreste que lon defende audit Collongnies et autres de non plus ainsi faire etc. aussi que M. le Scindique Chamoyex et le S^r contreroleur il advisent pour faire la sepparation des escolliers." R.C., Vol. 44, fol. 270.

church from civil interference in disciplinary matters. Lausanne was under control of the burghers of Berne who were concerned to keep a tight rein on the churches in their territory, and evidently found the chief pastor in Berne, Haller, sympathetic to their viewpoint. But the professors at the college in Lausanne, and the chief pastor, Pierre Viret, found Calvin's system of excommunication by Consistory much more satisfactory than leaving such matters up to the city Council. After long haggling, threats and counter-threats (in which Viret gave every indication of wanting to leave, it seems to me), and despite the plea of Bullinger and Peter Martyr that the men man their posts, their dismissal was a fait accompli by January of 1559. Theodore Beza had left before that, having been received 24 November 1558 by the Genevan Council to be lecturer in Greek.[127] By the end of May the roster of professors was complete and Calvin's statutes for the college were finished. Beza was elected as rector, a task--as we have seen--he labored at between diplomatic trips to France.

We have already quoted Monter to the effect that the expenses of this school had a drastic effect on the finances of the city government. The building was the only public building completed in Geneva during Calvin's stay there. How

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[127] Opera, 21, 708. R.C., Vol. 54, fol. 336. The whole affair is discussed by Roget, V, 207-223.

were these financed? Evidently there were three main sources of income. First, an effort was made to encourage people to give, both live gifts, and in their wills. For example, in 1559 a little over one thousand florins which had been willed to the school so recently begun was received upon the deaths of the testators.[128] A second source of income was the revenue from fines. In that same year the wife of Antoine Munier was fined twenty-five écus for false cloth-measuring (pour faux aulnage), which was given to the college.[129] But wills might pay the wages of three professors for a year and fines might pay for heat, but what about the construction? Interestingly enough, the Perrinists paid for the buildings! Over 30,000 florins went into construction in 1559 and again in 1560, money the city government realized from the sale of goods and properties belonging to the condemned who had been decapitated or who fled from the city. "Thus, ironically, the financial pillars of Calvin's new school turned out to be none other than his declared enemies: Perrin, Sept, Vandel, Berthelier, and their cronies."[130]

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[128]Roget, V, 232. Among these were the famous printer, Robert Estienne, Parisian refugee, usually given credit for versifying the Bible. The best work on the College is Charles Borgeaud, Histoire de l'Universite de Geneve, Vol. 1, L'Academie de Calvin, 1559-1798 (Geneva: Georg, 1800), p. 35f. During the first fifty years, the College received more than 500 bequests.

[129]Ibid., p. 233.

[130]Monter, p. 25.

This, by the way, throws some interesting light on city government and the growth of industry during Calvin's period. Almost no construction went on and when something was built it was only possible because of confiscation. Evidently there were either sufficient buildings in the city to absorb the influx of refugee industries--especially printing--or times were so hard they made do with what they had, remodeling rather than building. The school construction was not finished till 1562 and even then we might not have thought it finished. In November of 1564, after icy winds were blowing, Beza sollicited the Council to provide glass windows for the lower classes. The decision of the penurious Council was that such a frill could wait, and that in the meantime the scholars could make windows out of paper.[131]

Quirinius Breen has demonstrated that Calvin's humanism was so engrained that conversion did not rid him of the mental set he had acquired as a humanist scholar.[132] Humanism and Reformation had a great deal in common, as has been demonstrated over and over, and the delight in the classical Greek and Latin writer common to humanist thought is as evident in Calvin's program of study as in the writings of a

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[131]Roget, V, 244n.

[132]Quirinius Breen, John Calvin: a Study in French Humanism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931).

Hooker or Mather. Among the ancient authors Calvin mentions specifically in L'ordre for the college are Virgil, Cicero, Ovid, Seneca, Isocrates, Livy, Xenophon, Polybius, Herodian and Homer. In addition to their works being studied, the regents are warned that "they are not to make invectives against the authors whom they expound, but that they apply themselves to explicate their sense faithfully."[133]

And perhaps one can see something of Calvin's humanity--as well as a rejection of some of the grimness of his study in Montague College at the University of Paris--in his description of the office of principal, who was in charge of discipline and served as Dean under the Rector: He must be

> of a debonnaire spirit, having neither a rude nor bitter disposition, so that his whole life may give the scholars a good example, and must carry the vexations of his charge quite peaceably (doulcement).[134]

There must have been a few saints in the last half of the sixteenth century in Geneva, else this office would never have been filled.

The college was successful far beyond the dreams of

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[133] Sources du Droit, III, no. 983. The writings to be covered are found in the rules for the seven classes of the Schola privata, the first of two major divisions, p. 94 and 95. The concern for manner of teaching the ancients in "The Order for the Regents of the College," p. 91. The second major division, the schola publica was very unregimented, somewhat like European universities today. Borgeaud, 43-45.

[134] Ibid., p. 91.

those who began it. Beza wrote to Bullinger on 1 May 1564, just prior to the death of Calvin: "We have counted nearly 1200 scholars [in the schola privata] and their number increases daily."[135] Add to these pupils, the 300 in the schola publica. What strain this number of students--many of whom were probably not residents of the city--must have put on a city the size of Geneva. Of course, the students began to immigrate about the same time refugees began to leave, so perhaps the difficulties encountered were somewhat different, but no greater. At least most of them did not bring their families along! Probably the greatest expense to the city--apart from the building costs--were the salaries of ten professors only partly recovered by tuition.

Here, in an area at least tangentially related to social thought, we see the genius of Calvin at work again. Education was made cheap and compulsory, theoretically within the range of all. No one could escape at least a brush with learning in sixteenth century Geneva. When the opportunity came, higher education was introduced and a hard-pressed Council without demur undertook the difficult task of financing it from a budget that, as Monter has shown, was usually

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[135] Roget, VII, p. 69. It began with 600 students, Borgeaud, p. 1. Borgeaud, p. 51, cites the disgruntled Haller at Berne, who said the school would be for Geneva alone, since hard times and the uncertainty of their political situation made it unlikely that others would go. But almost all the 300 in the higher school were outsiders.

barely balanced. This expense was added to the constant struggle to pay off the perpetual obligation to debasle, sometimes only paying the interest. The education itself was humanist and Christian and lasting, having an incalculable effect upon scholars from France, Germany, the Low Countries, Scotland and England. It, like the other social institutions in Geneva--church and hospital--bear the indelible imprint of a man whose relationship with the world of men was formative.

G. The Regulation of Wages and Industry

A brief review of Calvin's social and economic thought would lead us to look for certain things in the area of commerce, wages and industry. We could expect government regulation of prices, wages and the whole arena of employer-employee relationships;[136] regulation against monopoly;[137] church intervention where thought necessary;[138] help for industry and commerce;[139] and concern for economic and social peace through binding contracts.[140] However, governmental regulation of prices was so common in those days, and was practiced long before, during and after Calvin's life there, that nothing need be said in that regard. Occasionally a price for a basic commodity would get out of hand--such as we

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[136]Supra, p. 53f. [137]Supra, p. 41f.

[138]Supra, p. 22. [139]Supra, p. 39f. [140]Supra, p. 66f.

saw happen for wheat in 1557--and the government would step in to do something about the situation. What could be sold, who could sell, where it could be sold--these regulations were quite common, and there is no indication that Calvin saw any need to intervene in this aspect of the marketplace. But we can look at some aspects of wage-paying and the regulation of industry to some purpose.

In the next chapter, we shall examine some negative aspects of Calvin's influence on wages paid to menu peuple. Wage-freezing and outlawing labor unions will get some attention then. Other than this we find evidence very fragmentary. One of the few instances where the Council took a hand in this occurred in 1561 when the ribbonmakers (rubantiers) came to complain that the masters "do not want to pay what is reasonable for the making of ribbons, in order that they might support themselves, so that if it weren't remedied they could be forced to leave the city." The Council then listened to management's side: four masters explained that they were paying the going rate and the journeymen ought to be content. So the Council appointed itself a board of arbitration and set two of its members to work out "such a rate for the making of the ribbons that it should be well for everyone."[141] Unfort-

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[141]Roget, VI, 193.

unately, all we can say here is that the ribbonmakers thought the Council might help them, and the Council did arbitrate the case. As to the justice of their decision, there is not a shred of evidence, except that the rubantiers did not leave town.

The only wages we can talk about with any confidence are those of the pastors. They were almost the only civic employees who earned all their living in their charge. Others--Syndics, treasurers, secretaries, and those concerned with legal matters--were paid, but their wages were not meant to be their subsistence. The pastors continually complained that they were not able to live on their wages--and they no doubt had justice on their side. In 1546 we read:

> Calvin, in the name of the others, has requested that it should please messieurs to have regard for their salaries which necessitate their living on such scanty wages, etc. And having listened to him speak decided that it should be theirs.[142]

What the wages were, or what increase was granted is not clear--though when Philip de Ecclesia came in 1542 he received a beginning wage of 240 florins per year. Often we read that a certain pastor was given some money, or wheat, or a robe because of his poverty. But the low point was reached in November 1557 when it came to the Council's attention that

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[142] Opera, 21, 382. 11 June 1546. R.C., Vol. 41, fol. 112.

the orphans of the deceased pastor, Abel Poupin, were destitute, going vagabonding (allans vacabondans).[143] The deacons who had oversight of the hospital were ordered to do something about this, but from then on the pastors banded together on this question and got some action.

On 3 January 1558, Calvin and Jacques Bernard, representing all the ministers of city and country parishes, presented a long plea to the Seigneurie. Included in the request were higher wages so that they might live honestly, and a plea that some goods once used by the Roman Church be put to this use--though just what goods is not stipulated; they complained that times were harder than previously and their poverty now quite obvious; the orphans of Poupin were alluded to; the pastors requested, not to be enriched, but to be able to live honestly; and Calvin requested, "without sham," that his wages be equal to the other ministers. The Council resolved to communicate with Calvin, since it wished to be liberal toward the ministers.[144]

On 20 January the wages of the ministers in the city were increased "because of their poverty and the dearness of

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[143] Opera, 21, 680. 22 November 1557. "Des enfans de feu M. Abel Popin ministre a este mis en avant quilz sont deias grans allans vacabondans. Arreste quon remecte ce a Ia charge de M. le Sindicque Chicquand et aux procureurs dlhospital de y pourvoir." R.C., Vol. 53, fol. 421.

[144] Ibid., 683. R.C., Vol. 54, fol. 32.

the times" to 250 florins and 12 coupes of wheat; seven days later the ministers in the country were raised to 240 florins plus the grain.[145] By that Fall the city pastors were raised again to 300 florins with no more wheat, much to the rejoicing of the pastors: "God be praised and thanked for this."[146] When Pierre Viret returned as a pastor he was given 400 florins, which placed him below Calvin (receiving 500) and above the other pastors, including Beza, who were receiving 300. This took place in the Spring of 1559.[147]

The final raise took place on 23 April 1562, when the Council raised the wages of the city ministers to 400 florins per year, university professors the same, while in the villages wages of 300, 280 and 240 florins were paid. A month later Calvin himself was raised to 600 florins.[148] The modern reader cannot help sympathize with the pastors of Céligny, Chancy, Neydens, Bossey and Moing who were only getting 240. When on 19 June a new minister was received and

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[145] Ibid., 685.

[146] Reg. Comp. Pasteurs, II, 81-83, follows several changes before the definitive one. Opera, 21, 709 for 6 December 1558, where the replacement of money for wheat was seen to accord with the pastors wishes because the wheat was not good (beau). Roget, V, 175.

[147] Roget, V, 220. As with the other men, free lodging was also his.

[148] Roget, VI, 289.

put directly into the city pastorate without undergoing "trial" in the country, the country pastors howled:

> Some of the ministers in the country were very discontented and even said this might discourage them, and that they would never have accepted the ministry if they had thought they would be left in the country. M. Calvin, very astonished, kept silence, but in his room after the departure of the Company cried out to someone, his hands thrust high together in the air: 'What a thing to see before death!'[149]

Frankly, one tends to side with the country pastors and to wonder at the difference in wages, although the suggestion of Professor Kingdon, that living conditions in the villages closer to the food supply might have been lower, may be the explanation sought.

My own attempts to correlate these wages with the prices of wheat and wine are inconclusive. The price evidence, summarized into tables by Bergier, is quite fragmentary and does not tell us much.[150] Suffice it to say that the city did not pay its fulltime workers well.

Regulation of the Printing Industry.

The one industry which we do have information for in Calvin's lifetime, as well as direct evidence of pastoral

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[149]Roget, VI, 290. Reg. Comp. Pastors, II,

[150]Bergier's discussion of wheat policy, p. 100-109, together with his appendices on the prices of wheat, p. 110-113 and wine, p. 117-120, are interesting but not particularly helpful. After 1536 most of the records seem to be for times of particular crisis, and thus are emergency prices.

concern, is the printing industry. Because of its importance and growth, it was more highly developed than other industries there and was the first to receive regulation from the Council, at the behest of the pastors, in 1560.

The printing industry in Geneva had been dying out in the early sixteenth century. But the Reformation changed that picture, as the city rapidly became the center for the diffusion of Reformed theology, partly through preachers sent out in increasing numbers, and partly through the printing of the literature of the Reformers, especially Calvin. From 1536 to 1550, Jean Girard was the leading printer in the city, and from 1543 till 1549 produced almost all Geneva's printing output. But after 1550, when Girard printed the new Latin edition of the Institutes, Jean Crespin, the Rivery brothers, Badius and Robert Estienne arrived, and the industry flourished both in quantity and quality, the latter being the contribution of the new refugee printers from France.[151]

Although Girard had a virtual monopoly all those years, this does not mean he had a free reign. The Council quickly began to censure his books when in 1539, during Calvin's period of exile, Girard published an anonymous book--probably by the wife of Antoine Froment--which compared the

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[151]Paul Chaix, Recherches sur L'Imprimerie à Genève de 1550 à 1564 (Geneva: Droz, 1954), p. 8-11.

pastors left in the city unfavorably with Calvin and Farel. Girard was thrown into prison for some days--no one was fooled by the false locus of publication, Anvers--and an edict was proclaimed:

> Decided that accompanying the sound of the trumpet, it should be made public that nothing of any sort should be printed in the city without license of messieurs under penalty of being taken and punished according to law.[152]

That Fall it was ordered that each printer should bring the first copy of a book to the city hall before the rest of the printing could go on. This hindered operations a great deal--a printer ran off one book and then waited for the censor to read it; so in 1540 this was changed to censorship of the signed manuscript, so that type was not set up till after the censorship had taken place.[153]

In France the development of the printing industry was far ahead of that in Geneva, and grave troubles between masters and journeymen had already broken out. These confréries of journeymen were really labor unions with their aims quasi-religious and frankly economic. In 1529 confraternities in Lyons struck; they did so again in 1539, a strike caused by "insufficient salaries, payments in kind, and excessive num-

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[152] Opera, 21, 248. R.C., Vol. 33, fol. 115. Chaix, 15-16.

[153] Chaix, 16.

bers of apprentices, as well as the bad division of working hours." In both Lyons and in Paris--for the 1539 strike spread there--the masters called in the authorities to "pronounce against the pretensions of the workers, against the principle of coalitions and infractions of the right (liberté) to work."[154] This led to the royal ordinance of Villers-Cotteret to lay down legislation against coalitions or monopolies of both masters and journeymen, but without much success.[155] The historians agree that the royal edicts favored the masters against the workingmen. Sée says that "with regard to salaries, fixed in many cases by public authority, establishing a maximum but not a minimum, they seem to have been increased in the course of the sixteenth century, but not in proportion to the depreciation of money from the price rises; that is, the condition of the salaried was aggravated."[156] Martin, while noting that the later royal edict of 1572--following printing strikes in Lyons and Paris the year before--contained some dispositions favorable to the journeymen, especially in limiting the number of apprentices, concludes: "the court in general adopted a policy of defiance to the consideration of the workers."[157]

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[154]Germain Martin, Histoire Économique et Financière, p. 187.

[155]Henri See, Le XVI[e] Siècle, p. 35 and 236.

[156]Ibid., p. 236.

[157]Martin, p. 187.

Perhaps the Printing Industry in Lyons, Geneva, Paris and other cities in the sixteenth century, more than any other cities in the sixteenth century, more than any other industry, contained in germ the tension between organized labor and co-operative management which we see in western industrialized society today. The competitive drive of the private entrepreneur was hedged by his need to cooperate with other masters against journeymen increasingly being organized into what resemble modern craft unions. Western civilization would have to pass through a fierce period of almost unlimited avarice on the part of capitalists, and almost unlimited demands on the unorganized labor of men only nominally free, before something of this same corporate balance would exist in its present ubiquity. Both labor and management in the sixteenth century constantly appealed to the state, proclaiming that justice was on their side. In France we have seen that the court elected the side of management. Now let us turn to Geneva.

In 1557 the Genevan Council took action against coalitions of masters at the instigation of Calvin who denounced the "superstitions and dissolutions of the trades when someone is raised to mastership."[158] The edict written that day

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[158] Opera, 21, 672. 9 August 1557. After speaking of violations in usury, Calvin denounced "...les superstitions et

prohibited any assemblies for dissolute purposes, nor swearing, nor other things.[159] This is not very clear and was put in a "better mode" the next day.

> No masters nor apprentices, regardless of profession, should be so hardy or bold to make illicit assemblies--even of less than an hour long--previous to availing themselves of some ordinances or edicts and statutes previously made among them, that they have not previously submitted to the Seigneurie and by our very redoubtable Lords looked into and reformed according to reason and in order to prevent all abuses. The penalty for anyone going against this is sixty sous and punishment according to the merit of the case.[160]

What we have, then, is a prohibition of labor organizations and management agreements alike. No doubt this was considered the fair way to proceed and prevent scandal on

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dissolutions des mestiers quand quelqunn y passe maistre." R.C., Vol. 53, fol. 265.

[159] Sources du Droit, III, no. 949. "A esté arresté qu'ilz soyent faictes cries que aulcunes assemblees de mestier ne se debgent fayre pour user de certains dissolu privilege et facon de faire qu'ilz font pour estre passé maistre, ny moing de serment, ny aultres chouses, qui ne soit passe, veu et arreste par nous au mellieur mode qu'il se pourra fayre."

[160] Ibid., III, no. 950. "Item que nul maistres ny apprentifz, de quelque mestier qu'ilz soient, ne soient hosés ny si ardis de faire illicites assemblees, ny moings d'heure en avant de user de quelques ordonnances ou soit edictz et status parcidevant faict entre eulz, qu'ilz ne soient par eulz premierement presentes à la Seigneurie et par nost. tres redoubtez seigneurs veu et refforme ainsin que sera par raison et pour obvier à tous abus. Et c'est sus poine, pour ung chescung à ce contrevenant, de soixante solz et d'estre chastie selon le merite de cas.

both sides. For now either side must either operate sub rosa or come to the Council to arbitrate differences and establish rules and regulations. Since this came about by Calvin's intervention, it seems safe to say that he favored the paternalistic features of this edict.

But Council's intervention, when it came, did not arise from either journeymen or masters directly, but from the Geneva Company of Pastors, though the doleances of the journeymen were the basic issue. It was upon the demand of two pastors that on 28 August 1559, the Council decided to establish an over-all regulation of the printing industry.

> Printers. Here spect. [i.e. spectable, term of respect used, so far as I can tell, for ministers only] Jn. Nyco. des Gallars et spect. Theodore de Beze have proposed that although there has already been enough inconvenience because of printers, nevertheless there are some disorders and divisions among them, especially between the masters and journeymen, concerning which they have been minded to make the following remonstrances: namely, that it would seem good that Messieurs appoint someone before whom the master printers will be called in order to be heard about what they would like to state about the order that ought to be established in order to prevent the confusions and irritations which are occurring among them; and then the journeymen should also be heard in their grievances, so that with respect to everyone an order might be set up which will be observed from now on, which they have asked to be provided and to advise as to how it could be done. Ordered that that should be done, and Seigneurs Bernard, Syndic Fran. Chevalier and Jeh. Chautemps appointed.[161]

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[161] Taken from R.C., Vol. 55, fol. 87. Chaix, p. 19. "Imprimeurs, Icy spect. Jn. Nyco. des Gallars and spect. Theo-

Up till now Geneva's printing troubles had been between masters--affairs of copyrights, pirated forms and the like. But now the issues seem primarily to be between masters and journeymen and internal regulation was necessary. It is interesting that the Council did not elect to solve the complex problems by fiat. "Democratically," says Chaix, "it decided first to call together and hear the interested parties, masters and journeymen...." It should be noted that this was not in accord with our American democratic procedure, which has tried to steer away from government intervention at all. Here the city arbitrators listened to both sides, "democratically," and on the basis of the knowledge gained composed an ordinance which would settle the difficulties. Not for them democratic strikes and lock-outs, the hiring of scabs and breaking of heads and windows. They wanted to be fair--and that they were, is shown by the longevity of the document they

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dore de Bèze ont proposé que combien que deca on ayt desja este assez importune a cause des **imprimeurs** toteffois il y a des desordres et divisions entre **iceux**, mesme entre les **maistres** et compagnons dont ilz ont advise de faire les **remonstrances** suyvantes, cest qu'il sembleroit bon que Messieurs deputassent quelques uns par devant lesquelz seront apelez les maitres imprimeurs pour estre ouys en ce qu'ilz voudroient declarer de l'ordre qui se pourroit establir pour eviter les confusions, et facheries qui pourront entre eux advenir, et puys apres soyent aussi ouys les compagnons, en leurs doleances, affin que sus le tout soit dresse ung ordre, qui sera observe cy apres, dont ilz suplient y proveoir, et adviser combien cest art emporte. Arreste que cela soit fait, et sont commys les seigneurs Bernard sind. Fran. Chevalier et Jsh. Chautems."

passed--, but for them peaceful industry was a right more basic than the right to run one's industry as one's own. It was collective bargaining, in a sense, but compulsory in genesis and the subsequent "agreement" binding on both parties.

It will not be necessary to produce and translate the whole ordinance. The regulations are complex, at times obscure to one not acquainted with the inner-workings of a printshop in the sixteenth century, and quite detailed.[162] But there are several features of interest to our study.

Masters were prohibited from plotting together to set a wage standard policy; and journeymen were likewise forbidden to band together to agree on a standard wage below which they would not work.

The journeyman was guaranteed job-security during the completion of a piece of work unless the work were too heavy or difficult for the journeyman, or he stole from the master of the shop. The journeyman was likewise bound to complete a piece of work barring sickness or inability, and various rules were laid down to take care of such eventualities.

Every master had to teach his apprentices well so that at the end of the apprenticeship the latter would be able to do the work well enough to be a journeyman. In addition, the

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[162]See Chaix, p. 20-25 for the text.

agreement between the two had to be in writing to obviate quarrels.

Masters were forbidden to overwork their journeymen and the latter enjoined not to hurry a piece of work in order "to have time and leisure for gaming." Nor could other journeymen demand anything of a former apprentice become journeyman, such as paying for a banquet, which entailed corruptions and inhuman constraint.

Days lost from work must be paid by the offending party. That is, if work was lost by part of the shop because of unexcused absence by a journeyman, then those wages lost were to come from his pocket. But if the master caused the work loss, then he would have to pay the men's wages even if they could not work.

There are other regulations concerning the relations between compositors and correctors, rules guarding against thefts of forms or sheets, warnings against bad language in the print-shops, and even stipulations about the candles for lighting the way between home and shop, which the workers must provide but the masters pay for.

Underlying the whole ordinance is the conviction that there exists a solidarity between journeyman and journeyman and between worker and master that all must acknowledge and be governed accordingly. There is, of course, the tacit ad-

mission that things have not worked out that way, else the ordinance would not be needed. But that cleavage between labor and management which we are so familiar with today is absent from the thought and wording of this law.

Chaix's comments are instructive.

> In its entirety it is necessary to recognize that the Genevan edict is marked by moderation and humanity. Preserving the rights of the masters, it obviously protects the journeymen and apprentices. The consultation which is at its origin, in accord with the evangelical ideal of the epoch, explains the equitable spirit of this regulation.[163]

In contrast with the French edicts of the period in which "almost all the prohibitions were imposed upon the journeymen to the profit of the masters," this one was conceived in a collaboration of the interested parties, which ensured a measure of justice not found in the French edicts which "emanated directly and sovereignly from the royal authority."[164] An example of this can be seen in the number of apprentices per press: in Lyons and Paris there were four or even five per press, but in the Genevan ordinance only one, although one of the few changes made in the ordinance in 1580 allowed two.[165] It was not till 1572 that the printing workers of Lyons received "some of the concessions which the printing workers of Geneva had received through the Genevan Ordinances of

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[163] Chaix, p. 26.

[164] Ibid., p. 29.

[165] Ibid., p. 35.

1560."[166]

Two other factors are of interest to us: wages and duration of work. About the former, we can say very little. Chaix has discovered only five instances where salaries for the printing industry are mentioned in the Registres du Conseil, and concludes that nothing can be established concerning wages from these.[167] Since room and board were sometimes part of the stipend in those days, even if we had salary figures they might help us very little.

Duration of labor is not quite so obscure. Chaix believes the figures show a working day of twelve hours, better than those of the printing workers of Lyons.[168] Concerning working days, we have more information. Although they agitated for two days off per week--Sunday and Wednesday--the workers received just half of the extra day they asked for. So every Sunday was a day of rest and recreation--as we have seen it bore no resemblance to the Puritan Sabbath--as well as every other Wednesday. It was ordered that any journeyman who took every Wednesday off, or any master who permitted that, would be banished.[169]

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[166]N. Z. Davis, "Protestantism and the Printing Workers of Lyons...", p. 404.

[167]Chaix, 39, 40. [168]Ibid., 40, 41.

[169]Ibid., 27-29 for details of a very hot squabble which took place the summer of 1561. The workers were ac-

Although most of our concern here is with the regulation of journeymen-master relationships, it is also worth pointing out that the ordinance does its best to spread the printing of "best-sellers" throughout the printing industry.

> And so that the privileges should be moderated and that no one should be burdened over much, the Seigneurie order for the present that the impressions of catechisms, prayers and psalms which are for the common use of the church, should be common to all.[170]

This meant that these works sure to be purchased could not be monopolized by any influential printer. This was also true of the Scriptures, whether whole or just the New Testament, although a new translation might belong to one printer till his first impression was sold. The latter rule seems to have just the right blend of entrepreneur encouragement and social concern.

The pastors were, of course, very concerned with this industry because it was their voice to the rest of the world. Hence we can expect that the mere making of ordinances would not bring an end to their concern that the industry be well-managed. Early in 1562 Calvin went before the Council to complain about the bad printing done in the city and the ease

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cused of monopoly and forcible measures against their fellow workers; a species of automation was looked into--"an invention to make two sheets for one"; and the journeymen argued they needed the second Wednesday in order to hear the Word of God!

[170]Chaix, p. 21.

with which men obtained the mastership. He exhorted the Council that those who did not do proper printing should lose their license to print. Roget tells us that seven printers were fined, and we know that one, Etienne Anastaise, lost his license because of faulty Bibles.[171] Poor Anastaise--he had already lost his license once before in 1560, when he got an adverse report from Beza and the other members of the Council's committee on printing, and was ordered to stop printing Calvin's Commentaries on the Epistles.[172] This time, not only was he ticked off for his bad Bibles, but the old affair of Commentaries was brought up again, ..."which are prohibited because

> they have not done honor to the city nor profit to the readers who have bought them because of the stupid and heinous errors of all sorts, despite the fact that they were sold at great cost and with excessive gain. Ordered that he make satisfaction in prison.[173]

He never seems to have functioned very well. On 25 June 1563, a list of printers and the numbers of presses was pre-

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[171] Roget, VI, 192, 3. Opera, 21, 772. 12 January 1562. R.C., Vol. 56, fol. 292 v. The R.C. say "Jehan," but the Anastaise brothers were often confused.

[172] Opera, 21, 739. 12 December 1560. This order, the same year the ordinance on printing was issued, denied licenses to Anastaise and two others "who do not understand their job."

[173] Opera, 21, 773. R.C., Vol. 56, fol. 300.

pared (there were twenty-four printers and thirty-four authorized presses), and Anastaise--for once given his right name, Etienne--was listed as unable to print any further without permission.[174] Our last notice took place long after Calvin had gone, when on 25 June 1571, a church in France objected to some alphabets printed by Anastaise, in which the Apostles' Creed lacked the entire article concerning the resurrection. He later corrected these.[175]

What can we establish from the above discussion? First, that the Vernerable Company of Pastors took enough interest in the industrial and economic affairs of the city to regard their own intervention as possible and desirable. This indicates something of the sphere of the Gospel that they were supposed to be preaching. It remains true, however, that this must be seen in the whole context of Calvin's thought in this area and other areas of social justice in which the pastors took a hand. For, by itself, it merely indicates that the ministers were concerned that their propaganda arm function smoothly. But even at this rather low

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[174] This list is reproduced in Chaix, p. 32.

[175] Chaix, p. 141. Chaix gives us a short repertory of Genevan printers in which he says that Anastaise was married to a daughter of Robert Estienne, one of the two greatest printers of Geneva--the other being Crespin--but "this illustrious alliance does not seem to have influenced his work...which remained perfectly mediocre."

level it is instructive to the modern Christian who thinks he can separate religion and politics, religion and economics, or religion and society, to see how impossible it is to disentangle the relationships between an industry (printing) and the propagation of the Gospel. If the former had been badly done, the latter would have suffered.

Secondly, in this intervention the workers were helped. This stands in marked contrast with France, where, as Sée, Chaix, Martin and Davis have all attested, government regulation worked to the benefit of patrons only.

Thirdly, the action of pastors and Council alike was what would today be called paternalistic. It has no observable connection with laissez-faire capitalism, nor was it socialistic. It turned on the frank recognition that both men and the industry were important and Geneva had better get things straightened out before it had the problems of Lyons or Paris. Arbitration, yes; but an arm-twisting arbitration which sometimes proves necessary even in our land with its long tradition of free bargaining.

All of this indicates a rather positive relationship between Calvin's views and the actual Genevan situation. And, further, shows that the Calvinist influence was salutary. The Ordinance remained in effect, with little change, for two and a quarter centuries.

H. Conclusion

Calvin's Geneva was a city with all the problems of its age. It had to deal with heretics and confessed spreaders of the plague; but also with chickens that dropped droppings in church and a cemetery too close and therefore too offensive;[176] with chimneyless and privyless houses, and nurses who endangered the lives of infants by sleeping with them;[177] with serious problems of defense against oppression, and the constant problems of getting enough wheat to feed the people.

In that city the stature of Calvin grew as the years went on. Nothing seems to have been beneath his notice, and

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[176] Opera, 21, 648. 10 September 1556: "Raymond Chauvet, minister, warns the Seigneurie that the dead are interred so close to the houses that there is a great stench, and that one named Mouroz has a chicken-coop of which the chickens make ordures in church." R.C., Vol. 52, fol. 302.

[177] After the victory of the Calvinists the city Council stepped up its efforts to reform the city root and branch. On 4 March 1556, a general visitation was made by the Seigneurie "...to enjoin servants to attend the sermons, to question them concerning their faith, to command parents to make their children go to school, to nurses not to place infants beside them when they go to bed; furthermore, they should inquire concerning rogues and rascals, prohibit making fires in rooms where there is no chimney, of cleaning and scraping chimneys in order to lessen the danger of fires, to order that those who do not have privies to build them in order to keep the streets clean, to prohibit renting a house or room to foreigners without permission of captains or dizeniers, to order that those who are on watch do so in person or get a good companion to do it." Roget, V, 56, 57.

no duty too trivial for the Council to ask his advice. In addition to being chief pastor, lecturer at the college and oft-times law-codifier; and in addition to his voluminous correspondence, his ecumenical, apologetical and polemical efforts, and his diplomatic concerns, the little world of Geneva continually called on his best efforts. It was Calvin who complained to the Consistory about the high cost of dying, when the undertakers--following their practice of eating and drinking at the expense of the relatives of the deceased--ate and drank a poor man's supper.[178] At a period when he was involved in renewal of the combourgeoisie with Berne, but also devastated by the adultery of his sister-in-law with his own servant, he with three members of the Council was appointed a commission to examine a new invention, supposed to make stoves, furnaces, ovens and fireplaces heat at half the expense.[179] From furnace examiner he must needs turn to literary criticsm, to decide whether a cantique written by young Michel Roset to celebrate the renewal of the alliance was worth presentation. Roset's thrill at being involved in the alliance negotiations at the age of twenty-six, must have been immeasurably heightened by hearing his work

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[178] Opera, 21, 781. 18 June 1562. Reg. du Consistoire.

[179] Roget, V, 58. "The common measure of humanity was decidedly not made for this exceptional person."

praised by Calvin, who "found it beautiful and elegant in poetry, sense, substance and understanding."[180]

But in more serious matters he was also available. As we have seen, it was Calvin whose advice finally proved acceptable to the city when it had to decide how far to help Lyons in defense of Reformation in 1562, when the city of Geneva felt threatened as well. No wonder the Council refused to allow him to travel to France to take part in the Poissy negotiations unless "some notable hostages" were received in return.[181]

As Monter puts it: "In Genevan history, all roads lead eventually to Calvin."[182] His ability to distinguish the spiritual and the temporal was uncommon for his day; his refusal to allow the spiritual be subject to the temporal was uncommon to Protestantism in his day; his ability to suffuse the temporal with the values of the spiritual without robbing the former of its identity is instructive for our day.

Not everything was well in the permeation of Calvin's thought into Genevan politics and society. We shall spend

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[180] Opera, 21, 682. 28 December 1557. R.C., Vol. 54, fol. 25. Also Roget, V, 90, 91.

[181] Opera, 21, 754,5. Supra, p. 131. Although there is no evidence that the Queen Mother wanted Calvin in France.

[182] Monter, p. 118.

the next chapter looking at some serious problems. But the extent of the permeation, and the healthiness of that permeation for the poor and dispossessed is remarkable.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERMEATION OF CALVIN'S VIEWS: NEGATIVE RESULTS

Everyone is aware of the ambiguity of the church's participation in mundane affairs. Sometimes the influence of the church has been of tremendous benefit to the lives of men; sometimes it has proved pernicious. To concentrate on the christianizing and civilizing influence of medieval monasteries or nineteenth century missionaries is to stress a generally beneficial aspect of that influence. But to reflect on the savagery of the church-sponsored Crusades is depressing. The imprint of the Gospel message may be seen in the art of Dante, Milton, Palestrina, Bach, Raphael or Rembrandt; but the imprint of the church's message may also be seen in censorship, indices of forbidden books, banal hymns, plaster statues and Jesus-with-his-hair-parted-down-the-middle. I am tremendously impressed by the canonists' attempt to harmonize conscience and economic creed for the bewildered merchants of the Medieval period; and astonished by the crudity of ecclesiastical action in the marketplace.

What is generally admitted to be true--though each

might want to choose his own illustrations, and, perhaps, argue with the ones above--was certainly true of Calvin. If he was generally beneficial to Genevan social and economic life, his influence was not always so. The preceding chapter dealt with some positive applications of Calvin's views in the Genevan scene. An attempt was made to avoid rigidity in interpretation by the pragmatic test of contemporary value. Not, Did Calvin blaze the trail to the true and good society with right economic underpinnings--whether capitalistic or paternalistic or socialistic? But did this action ameliorate some bad condition; did that action help the poor; did this edict create jobs; and that decision protect the republic. The present chapter will attempt to deal with negative influences in the same way. One could argue that since such-and-such a decision in the long run was in line with the advance of laissez-faire capitalism, it was therefore bad (or good) regardless of its more immediate contribution. Such interpretation is not entirely ignored, of course, but the intent has been to ignore far-reaching consequences as much as possible and concentrate on the day-to-day and year-to-year life of the people of Geneva. This concrete approach is the aim of the present chapter as well.

A. The Church and the Temporal Sword

We come back time and again to the relation between

church and state in Calvin's thought and in Genevan practice. We have seen Calvin's efforts to preserve the freedom of the church in the matter of discipline. We have also seen that the distinction Calvin drew between the two institutions did not preclude ecclesiastical attempts to speak and try to influence the state in the most mundane matters, such as the regulation of labor-management relationships. But the tie between the two in Calvin's Geneva also preserved the time-honored practice of the state wielding the sword on behalf of the church. As we saw, this did not mean that the church pretended to control both swords, only that in certain cases ecclesiastical censure required state punishment. This simply underlines the truth in the cliché that one cannot ever really separate the spiritual and the temporal. The modern state--though generally without ecclesiastical prodding--still punishes adulteries, fornications, desertions and other "consistorial" matters if they upset the common weal.

But in Geneva the church's use of the secular sword was often quite clumsy, not only seen in retrospect but even by contemporaries. The long process of dismissing de Ecclesia from the ministry is an illustration. The discussion between the Company of Pastors and Council over that sad figure ran on for exactly four years, the pastors wanting to dismiss their wife-beating, heretical, insolent, incorrigible,

usurious brother; the Council either unconvinced or unable to fire him. And when it was all over Viret, in Lausanne, informed the brethren that, unknown to them, the Council gave de Ecclesia a good recommendation to the burghers of Berne.[1] The secular officials simply refused to wield the sword, and since the church-state entente was such that the church's discipline was merely verbal, ecclesiastical discipline did not happen.

In the de Ecclesia affair the weakness of the church's situation is clear. In the affair of names not to be given children at baptism, church pressure caused the state to exercise its authority in an area clearly removed from its rightful province. It all began because too many babies were being named after St. Claude, a local saint, and therefore the name of an idole. Calvin came to the Council twice late in August 1546 over this problem, getting nowhere. Then a ruckus broke loose at St. Gervais when one of the pastors refused to baptize a child Claude, and insisted on naming him Abraham. Finally, after Calvin had wearied the Council to death with the matter, messieurs proclaimed an edict prohibiting the use of certain names: idols, such as Claude and

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[1] Roget, II, 258,9n. The affair is discussed above in our usury section. See Opera, 21, 448-450, 509, 535, 540, 1; also Reg. Comp. Pasteurs, I, 47, 56-57, 76, 132, 135, 144, 148, 160.

Mama; the three kings (presumably Caspar, Melchoir and Balthazar); names of offices, such as Baptiste, Iuge, Evangeliste; names pertaining to deity, such as Dieu le filz, Espeoir, Emanuel, Saulveur or Jesus; inept or absurd names, Sepulchre, Croix, Typhaine, Nouel, Pasques, Pentecoste, Toussainctz, Dimenche, Chrestien (because common to all); nor names with bad sounds, such as Gomin, Mermet, Sermet, or Allemande; double names; or corrupted names, such as Tyvan or Tevenot for Estienne, or Monet in place of Simon.[2]

Of course, many of these names might well have been refused by the ministers. A child named Sepulchre or God-the-Son would be hard to swallow. But for Messieurs to pass an ordinance prohibiting names--some, like Claude and Balthasar, quite common--strikes us as ridiculous, and evidently struck the Council the same way. Here ecclesiastical influence was exerted in a farcical, if not hurtful, manner. It's a good thing that Clement Clarke Moore's famous poem, The "Visit of St. Nicholas," had not yet been written, else pastor Nicholas des Gallars would have been carrying an illegitimate name like Claude Roset and Jean Baptiste Sept.

1. Human Solidarity and the Individual

For the past one hundred years mankind has found it-

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[2] Opera, Xa, 48, "Projet D'ordonnance sur les Noms de Baptême."

self torn between two unChristian theories of human evaluation, Communism and radical individualism. Most often propagandists for both views rival each other in the rationalism of their respective anthropologies. Neither view, whether expressed by a Lenin or a Robert Welch, has room for the obligation to love one's neighbor, which was preached (if often broken) by the church in the Middle Ages, and preached (if often broken) by the pastors of Geneva. The partially reconstituted human life of man--in Calvin's theology--must be a life in loving community. In discussing the Cène, Calvin wrote:

> We shall benefit very much from the Sacrament if this thought is impressed and engraved upon our minds; that none of the brethren can be injured, despised, rejected, abused, or in any way offended by us, without at the same time, injuring, despising, and abusing Christ by the wrongs we do; that we cannot disagree with our brethren without at the same time disagreeing with Christ; that we cannot love Christ without loving him in the brethren; that we ought to take the same care of our brethren's bodies as we take of our own; for they are members of our body; and that, as no part of our body is touched by any feeling of pain which is not spread among all the rest, so we ought not to allow a brother to be affected by any evil, without being touched with compassion for him.[3]

In order to preserve a degree of purity in the church, the Body of Christ, that Body--though bound together by the love of God--must exercise internal discipline. Calvin's

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[3]Institutes, IV, xvii, 38. This whole subject is discussed above in Chapter I, p. 5-24.

discussion of that discipline is really a marvel of insight and moderation. He called for private admonitions for smaller or private sins; public admonitions for notorious sins; and ex-communication for "flagitious and enormous crimes." The latter was practiced for three ends: that God be not dishonored by numbering with the Body of Christ such "foul and putrid members"; that the good be not corrupted by constant association with the wicked; and that those censured be led to repentance. The latter end means that the ex-communicated brother, though now a stranger to Christ is still, paradoxically, a brother, else "our discipline will be in danger of speedily degenerating into cruelty."[4]

So far, so good. We know from Calvin's preaching that he tried to reform Geneva from the pulpit, but we also recognize that private admonitions were his way of dealing with smaller sins. The public admonitions sometimes got out of hand, as when he called the Council a "Council of the devil" from the pulpit--but it is easy to recognize the temptation. Ex-communications seem to have been handled pretty much as he said.

The problem arises at this point; for many sinners the way led straight from the ecclesiastical censure of the Con-

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[4] Ibid., IV, xii, 1-13.

sistory to state punishment inflicted by the Council. Often the punishment was written directly into the church ordinances.[5] And this welding of ecclesiastical censure and the temporal sword was part and parcel of Calvin's view of the duty of the magistrate:

> ...civil government is designed, as long as we live in this world, to cherish and support the external worship of God, to preserve the pure doctrine of religion, to defend the constitution of the Church, to regulate our lives in a manner requisite for the society of men, to form our manners to civil justice, to promote our concord with each other, and to establish general peace and tranquility.
>
> Nor let any one think it strange that I now refer to human polity the charge of the due maintenance of religion, which I may appear to have placed beyond the jurisdiction of men. For I do not allow men to make laws respecting religion and the worship of God now, any more than I did before; though I approve of civil government, which provides that the true religion which is contained in the law of God, be not violated, and polluted by public blasphemies, with impunity.[6]

What often happened in practice was the human solidarity which men have in Christ, and which is expressed in the church, was defended and pursued in such a manner that the rights of the individual in Geneva were ignored. Through-

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[5]Not the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances for the city, but the "Ordinances for the Supervision of Churches in the Country," specify the fines for missing worship, midwives who baptize, persons who "spin wildly around in the dance," and other sins. Theological Treatises, p. 76-82.

[6]Ibid., IV, xx, 2-3.

out the last chapter, we argued that generally the pursuit of the common weal was beneficial. Here we shall argue that sometimes privacy was violated, the weak were brow-beaten and at times physically beaten, and brutality was promoted and condoned in the name of religious and civil harmony. The tension between society and the individual is always liable to tip; in Geneva it sometimes tipped over and distributed horror on the individual.

It is one thing to admonish in private for private sins. It was another to play peeping Tom to catch private persons in private peccadilloes. We can sympathize with one Jean Guidon who, on 10 May 1553, was brought before the Consistory for swearing by the Body of God and making a ruckus in his home. M. Jean declared "...that it was neither fair nor honest to go along the rooftops in order to see what people are doing, and that if he had had a cross-bow or a blow-tube (sarbacane) he would have dislodged those so well-informed about what goes on in his house."[7] This amusing practice proved quite deadly in the affair of Jaques Gruet. On 28 June 1547, someone had attached a note to the pulpit at St. Peter's. Aimed primarily at Abel Poupin, who had been particularly vitriolic in Consistory hearings with the Favre

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[7]Roget, III, 282, digs this one from the still-unpublished Reg. du Consistoire.

family, it was addressed to "fat belly and your companions." The note warns them to leave the city, refers to them as "fucking renegade priests," and threatens them with the fate of the canon Werle, who was killed in the riots preceding independence.[8] The author of the note was thought to be Jaques Gruet, bon vivant and free-thinker. He was arrested and confessed under threat of torture that he had composed the document, though it was not in his handwriting. Then his quarters were searched and books and papers showing his heretical views came to light. Among other items to anger Calvin and/or the Council: he spoke well of the Pope, but referred to Calvin as abuseur, ambitieux, fier, glorieux, pertinax; wrote concerning Moses, "That horned one says much and proves nothing"; and "all laws, both divine and human have been made by the caprice of men"; he decried officers of justice investigating the private lives of individuals; and worst, from the magistrates point of view, was a letter in which he advised a Frenchman to write to Francis I (du grand Turc) to come to close the mouth of Calvin. The latter was treason, or close to it, but Gruet argued that it was not meant seriously and it had not been sent anyway. Imprisoned the day the note was found, he was tried before the Council daily

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[8] French translation of the patois placard is found in Roget, II, 290.

from 2 July for three weeks. It is interesting that the Consistory had nothing to do with this trial, though part of the charge was heresy. Less than a month after his incarceration he was sentenced to death for blasphemy and rebellion, "in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."[9]

The public, then, was protected; but the individual? His house was searched. Every confession he made was either extracted by torture or the threat of torture. There seems to have been every intent to find him guilty and put him away. Thus the solidarity of the human community required the blood of the one who threatened that community. It is difficult, of course, to abstain from imposing modern ideas upon the Reformer and the magistrates of Geneva. They did, after all, live in the sixteenth century. But there was nothing in the arrest, trial and beheading of Jaques Gruet to give us reason to think that any regard whatsoever was had for his rights as a man.

It could be argued that the deplorable lack of private morality in that day justified some of the extreme mea-

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[9]Roget, II, 289-312, discusses the trial at some length, as well as the letters written by Calvin which refer to it. Gruet seems to have been a free-thinker in a frivolous way, immoral and resentful of authority, but not deep enough to have called a heretic, nor dangerous enough to be convicted of lèse-majesté.

sures taken. Extracts from the Registres du Conseil prior to the Reformation indicate that the priests and monks of Catholic days were constantly getting into trouble because of prostitutes and lewd women.[10] Some of the early Protestant pastors fared no better, Simon Moreaux being deposed in 1545, the next year two losing their posts together for attending the baths "nud a nud" with one Huguenne and her sister, and Jean Fabri being removed for suspicion as late as 1556.[11] The absence of public disapproval is well illustrated by the case of the Lieutenant, Jean Ami Curtet, who was tried and imprisoned for fornication, degraded from office and compelled to seek pardon from the Two Hundred in 1536. Six months later he was elected first Syndic, highest post in Geneva![12]

But there was more to the defense of public solidarity than simply chaotic moral conditions. One could, I think, say that the authorities went out of their way to search for dissenters. A case in point was that of the card-manufacturer Pierre Ameaux in 1545. Ameaux was a member of the Small

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[10]Froment, Actes et Gestes, "Extracts" c-cv.

[11]For Moreaux, Opera, 21, 350-354; Champereaux and Megret, Ibid., 367; Fabri, Reg. Comp. Pasteurs, II, 66.

[12]Foster, "Geneva before Calvin," p. 19. Roget appends to the end of each of his seven volumes the names of councillors and pastors, and we see that Curtet served on the Small Council each year but one from 1537 to the end of Roget's work in 1567. He was first Syndic again in 1541, 1545, 1552, 1556 (the first election after the Perrinist defeat), 1561 and 1565.

Council who complained to a small gathering in his home that Calvin was an evil man, only a Picard, and had preached false doctrine.[13] The Council duly examined the evidence--brought in by an informer at the private gathering--and decided Ameaux should pay a fine, and with bared head and torch in hand, kneel to the ground and confess his sins. But this did not placate Calvin who wanted a harsher sentence imposed upon one who could call his ministry into question. Before the whole quarrel was over, the Council had been split into two factions, the original prosecutor, Claude Roset (Michel's father) had resigned his task in disgust at the over-zealous, the Consistory had made protracted statements in favor of Calvin, a riot took place in St. Gervais, pastor Henri de la Mare was cashiered for friendship with Ameaux, and the unlucky card-manufacturer spent over two months in prison, lost his office, and had to make a complete tour around the city in his shirt, head bared, carrying a lighted torch, and then kneel to the ground confessing to libel. He also had to pay the expenses of the trial.[14] Christian love simply departed in

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[13] Opera, 21, 368. 27 January 1546. "Lon a revelle que Ameaulx a diest que M. Calvin estoyt meschant homme et nestoyt que un picard et preschoyt faulce doctrine." R.C., Vol. 40, fol. 359.

[14] The Annals are full of this trial, Opera, 21, 368-377. Roget, II, 207-223, gives a good account and tells us something of Ameaux's later citations before the Consistory, which give some evidence that Ameaux neglected worship but conducted services in his own home.

this sad affair as Calvin pressed rigorously for civic solidarity, which could only be guaranteed if dissent was put down severely. One reads the account even today with shame and sorrow.

There is evidence that the Consistory did not always perform its task with moderation. In the drawn-out affair between the Favre family and the Consistory, the Council had to counsel both sides to have more care for their language. Pastor Abel Poupin was picked out pointedly and warned not "to use what he uses against those who are called to the Consistory."[15] Since he had called François Favre a dog, it is no surprise that his daughter referred to Poupin as a "fat loin of a French pig," and nearly rode him down with her horse when fleeing to the family estates to avoid prison. The next day the Council made a special resolution to the effect that people should be treated more graciously in Consistory meetings. Thus suspicion arises that in practice Calvin's views concerning private and public admonition really amounted to something only a few steps removed from an inquisition. However, it must be admitted that in the case of the Favres, they probably got everything they were asking for.

Calvin's instincts were for the good of the public,

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[15] Opera, 21, 499. 21 March 1547. R.C., Vol. 42, fol. 63.

but too often the good of the individual--which must be protected if in the long run the public is to benefit--was not protected. If anything, Calvin himself was harder on the wrong-doer than others in the Genevan community. An example of this occurred in 1563 when Jacques de St. Mortier was arrested for embezzlement and theft and would not confess. The Council gave the case to five judges, one of them Calvin, whose office does not make clear how he came to be involved in this bit of judiciary or magistracy. The other four judges concluded that he should be whipped, but Calvin that he should be put to death! The Council, still perplexed, sent him to the crane (grue) and then released him after this torture, although he never confessed. Calvin was sure of his guilt despite lack of proof and would have sacrificed the individual for the sake of community.[16]

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[16]Roget, VII, 42. Roget gives a resume of a number of cases in 1563 where cases tried before the Council, probably first tried in Consistory, had penalties affixed after consultation with Calvin. Most likely the reason was not his position as pastor, but because of his legal knowledge. Examples: two arsonists were burned in effigy, whipped and imprisoned for four years; upon the advice of Calvin a woman oft-tried for impudicite was given two hours in stocks in addition to six days in jail; upon the advice of Calvin a man who pushed his mother-in-law against a door was put to the collier also; on the other hand, it was due to Calvin's advice that a young scholar who stole from his father was released because the father had not initiated a complaint; a bigamous woman was whipped publicly. Roget adds: "Could not Calvin, hampered by illness and overworked, have transferred to others these magisterial concerns in criminal matters,

However, in at least two instances Calvin tried to intervene to secure better conditions for prisoners and easier death for the condemned. In the Servetus case, as everyone knows, Calvin wished for death, then burning. Nine years earlier, on 9 March 1545, Calvin had come to the Council pleading for better treatment for prisoners convicted of spreading the plague by smearing excretion from infected bodies upon doorposts. The whole story sounds like witchcraft trials where people actually believed they had sold their own souls to the Devil. Anyway, the executioner was asked to be more careful when he amputated hands (!) and to make sure those being burned were already dead. A small thing, perhaps, but of some consequence at a time of fear and horror at the plague and those convicted of spreading it (empoysonneurs) from house to house.[17]

Sixteenth-century Geneva was not made a more merciful state because of the influence of Calvin. In some ways, it

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quite sterile and having little connection with tasks of a minister of the Gospel?" p. 43, 44.

[17] Opera, 21, 348. 9 March 1545. "M. Calvin ministre a faict grande requeste pour les povres que sont condampnes a mort, mesmes pour ces empoysonneurs, cest que lon advise de non les fere languyr etc. Ordonne quil soyt commande a Lexequteur des malfaycteurs quil soyt plus diligens quil nest pas quant il leur coppe les maiens: et quant il viendra a les brusles quil mecste moyen quil soyent incontinent mors par ung estrangle chart ou aultrement." R.C., Vol. 40, fol. 42v.

does not seem to have been the aim to treat prisoners badly. Jailing was common, and many counsellors saw the inside of L'Eveché themselves, and generally the treatment there must have been pretty good by medieval standards. The Council kept strick surveillance over the man and woman in charge. But the common method of third-degree was torture, pure and simple, and there is no hint that Calvin ever tried to protect the individual from this trial. Punishments often were rude and cruel also. In addition to public whippings, tongues were pierced, ears trimmed, people were branded with the mark of the Seigneurie, and at times burning was done in effigy.[18]

All of the items mentioned in this section are part of the material taught in humanities classes or reviewed without understanding by a Stephen Zweig. They are dished up as if Calvin contributed nothing to Protestantism, but simply brought the Inquisition into the Reformation. This, as we have argued, is simply not so. These conditions had long existed everywhere. But they do show the Reformer in a bad light precisely because his theory was weighted toward love and justice. They serve, perhaps as warnings (if we need any) that even the common good must be protected with dis-

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[18]See, e.g., Roget, VI, 194, 5. The hot pincers used on the empoysonneurs in 1545 seem not to have been used again.

cretion; that evil-doers must be tried justly and punished mercifully; that the public weal does not demand individual woe. Or, as C. S. Lewis has said somewhere: It takes a saint to make an Inquisitor. That is, you have to care more about good and evil than most of us do to want to take extreme measures against it.

2. Political blinders

Before we leave the subject of the church and the sword of the magistrate, we should say a word about the one instance when Calvin's religious convictions caused political blindness and outright injustice. It should be said at first, however, that such was not usually the case. As he looked afar, Calvin could see quite clearly the earthen vessels God had raised up to foster and protect the Reformation. He had no delusions about the strength or morals of Prince Condé, for example, nor for King Anthony of Navarre (father to Henry of Navarre, Henry IV), who for a time espoused the Huguenot cause. One simply cannot imagine Calvin allowing a Philip of Hesse to con him into permitting bigamy.

We have recounted in Chapter II some of the events surrounding the defeat of the Perrinists. There is no need to rehash them here, except to recall that the evening of 16 May 1555, a riot broke out in the streets of Geneva, which was interpreted by the majority of the Council to have been

an attempted coup d'Etat. There was almost no evidence for that charge, and in the surrounding cantons opposition to the executions and the flight of the more fortunate almost amounted to a storm. Haller wrote to Bullinger that "Calvin is blamed now by those who, up till now, were always his supporters." Later, he wrote that one could hardly find one person in a hundred to speak well of Calvin. François Hotman wrote from Basel that "Calvin isn't spoken of here any better than in Paris." And Musculus from the same city lamented: "The hatred around here for our well-loved brother Calvin increases every day."[19]

Calvin's response to these calumnies, contained in a long letter to Bullinger (to whom the other letters were addressed), is certainly disappointing, although common in his day. He avers he was not present at the tortures, which he describes as quite light, and defends the torture by saying:

> But it was quite natural to do this; without that they would have denied everything, being encouraged by their adherents. The judges were not able to allow that they deny the plot, since it was evident.[20]

Here, as later with the embezzler, Calvin presumed the guilt of the accused. The trial was quite unnecessary under such a judiciary. That there was a plot at all is denied by more

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[19]Roget, IV, 321, 2.

[20]Roget, IV, 323. From Opera, 15, 830.

balanced scholars as Roget and Williston Walker. As the latter says,

> ...the facts speak too clearly against the existence of any well-planned conspiracy to overturn the Genevan government to make that interpretation tenable.

Of Calvin's assurance that it was a plot to overthrow the magistrates, he writes,

> There is no reason to doubt that Calvin and most of his sympathizers sincerely believed that the affair was a deep-laid plot. He thought no good of Perrin and Vandel. Their work was, and had long been, in his judgment one hostile to God. But it was a very convenient belief, also, in the existing political situation.[21]

Indeed it was a convenient belief. The usually perspicacious Calvin, who cared not for the appearances put up by men, was in this case certain that Perrin had troops waiting to attack. Despite the fact that only one man received a stone on the ear, the whole city had narrowly escaped assault. Dislike for the silly, comical, pugnacious, infuriating comique Caesar and his friends, turned Calvin's judgment to nonsense in this affair. The common weal, the solidarity of the community, had to be protected.

B. Sumptuary Legislation

In the last chapter we extolled the efforts of Calvin in the war on poverty in Geneva. In this chapter we intend

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[21]Walker, p. 352,3.

to turn the light in such a way that several of the dark spots in this war are evident. It would be strange if there were not some. Some of the efforts were both helpless and hopeless; some were obviously ignored; others probably produced more hardship, rather than alleviating bad conditions.

The sumptuary legislation on food and apparel was not so much pernicious as it was hopeless. Such legislation either depends upon consensus, or hopes to bull its way to consensus, and there is little or no indication that such agreement either existed or was obtained. The creation of the ephemeral abbayes, which were to take the place of honest-to-goodness taverns, was the first attempt to control over-eating and drinking. Brought into being by an edict on 28 May 1546, these five abbayes were located in diverse parts of town, and had for presidents the four Syndics and the lieutenant. The host was to allow no improper language, dice-playing, dancing, dishonest songs, nor was anyone allowed to enter after nine p.m. Each who ate or drank first had to pray; a French Bible was required on the premises in which anyone could read who wished, and conversation about the Word of God was to be encouraged.[22] These abbayes lasted less than a month, for by 22 June the complaints had reached such a

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[22]Roget, II, 233, 4.

pitch that the Two Hundred gave license to feed and serve drinks back to the original purveyors.

Some of the gaming legislation, which was not strictly sumptuary legislation, was not the creation of Calvin but had existed long before. For example, the anti-dancing regulation of 1549, wherein one was "not to sing dishonest songs nor dance in any manner," was simply a restatement of laws passed both in Catholic days and while the city was under anti-Calvinist control.[23] It is interesting to see that Councillors passed such laws even if they were among those to break them. Perrin, first Syndic when the 1549 ordinance was made law, had spent some time on bread and water in 1546--so had his wife and father-in-law--for breaking that same rule. Amblard Corne was first Syndic the next year, when the same edict was reissued, and he too had been arrested and spent three days dieting because of the same caper with Perrin and company.[24] And

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[23] Sources du Droit, II, no. 860. 17 December 1549.

[24] See Roget, II, 228. Earlier laws prohibiting dancing were passed in 1487 and 1517, as well as 1539. The text of the 1550 ordinance makes it clear that the situation was simply not being dealt with. Opera, 21, 460. 20 Jan 1550. "The ordinances concerning dancing should not be lessened [i.e. the fines], but that they no longer be allowed. [This is the report of Calvin and Poupin to the Council.] Concerning which it is decided that proclamations should be made at the sound of the trumpet that no one should dance in any fashion at all: the penalty being three days in prison on bread and water, and sixty sous for each time, half for the hospital and the other half for the court." The last divi-

he was presiding officer at the Consistory! So the evidence leads one to suspect that habit and custom were stronger than regard for civic sobriety. While not a central issue by any means, and not the creation of Calvin or the pastors, the continuation of dancing regulations (along with card-playing, dicing, etc., for money) with stiff monetary fines contains a note of desperation.

Nor did the real sumptuary legislation--at least in sartorial matters--fare any better. The laws passed in 1558 are not extant, but from the preamble we know they had mainly to do with matters of dress and banqueting.[25] But six years later, on 8 June 1564, a new edict was passed which admitted, in effect, that the hope that all would live in "sobriety and honest mediocrité" had been shattered, and instead new clothing fashions had been introduced to get around the details of the code, and other excesses had been introduced from the outside world. Among the restrictions were the old ones about gold chains, precious stones, embroideries and other items of feminine splendor, but also restrictions meant to keep the wives of gens métier and serving girls dressing according to

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sion is important, I think; it was meant to encourage the lieutenant de justice, at that time Jean A. Curtet, to do his duty in enforcing an unpopular edict. R.C., Vol. 44, fol. 306 v.

[25]The discussion in the last Chapter, p. 174-179, includes the citation of the sources.

their social rank.[26] In other words, there was a certain unreality about these codes that precluded their being taken very seriously by ordinary men and women. Should we say that it shows a tendency on the part of Calvin to over-legislate--a weakness of medieval and contemporary society as well. The consensus should have been reached first, then the legislation.

The criticism of Berthold Haller, chief pastor in Berne, and friend to Calvin, is instructive. Writing to Heinrich Bullinger in 1559, he said of Calvin and Viret: "If they had the governance of the Church of Corinth, they would have excommunicated not only the incestuous, but almost the whole community."[27]

We cannot fault the object of such legislation, for it sprang primarily out of regard to the poor, as we have seen. And even that which seems to us today to have had no other object than to keep people in line--such as the ordinances concerning dancing and dicing--were widespread in that day in Catholic and Protestant lands alike. But they show Calvin and the Council to be unaware of the limits of legislation without community agreement in areas not essential to the

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[26] Sources du Droit, III, no. 1050. 8 June 1564. Particular mention was made of hats in this regard.

[27] Opera, 17, 464.

gospel proclamation. We may extol their courage or their concern, but not their wisdom. The application of a social position guided by brotherly and economic concern was a bust.

C. Usury

In the last chapter we argued that Calvin's direct approach to the problem of usury was tremendously influential in the Genevan marketplace.[28] He was able to distinguish between loaning for consumption at interest--a crime akin to murder--and loaning for production and enterprise, which was regulated severely, but practiced without specious dodges in Geneva. But there was one obvious failure, it seems to me, and another aspect of Genevan economic practice which raises some questions.

The failure lies in the fact that there is no indication that anyone ever loaned money freely "for consumption." Money was given, of course, to the needy by way of the deacons or through the hospital. Probably many poor refugees were helped in this way, and themselves later gave to the hospital that others might be helped. But it is clear that money lent to peasants was generally lent at interest, and this was the sort of lending that rates the term "consumptive," i.e. money lent that the poor might be able to get

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[28] Supra, p. 180-194.

along till the crops came in. I think it likely, against Paul F. Martin, that Calvin had something to do with the 1557 edict which prohibited over-charging the farmer in this regard.[29] But that the simple deuteronomic prohibition which Calvin extolled was ever honored in practice--except as a specie of public charity--seems very unlikely.

But more interesting is the question raised by two economists about the effect of the 5 per cent ceiling that Calvin helped nail down so tightly between 1544 and 1557. J. F. Bergier points out that in the country this was a severe limitation of the rates formerly used between city-dwellers and their country peasants.[30] The other economist, Andre E. Sayous argues that the limitation was too-restrictive:

> ...far from facilitating transactions by a breadth of spirit, he [Calvin] established barriers more serious than an interdiction, almost systematically eluded because too absolute: the fixation of a rate of interest not at all high for the epoch (at first 5 per cent, then'un pour quinze', that is, 6.66 per cent), cramped the capitalists even more than the fact that soon the lender was put to oath, with all its consequences, concerning the size of the sum in fact paid back....Although some isolated operations might escape censure, a professional lender, with exaggerated conditions imposed, would not be able to pursue his activity without exposing himself to grave penalties.[31]

Now, if Calvin realized that in general the standard

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[29] Supra, p. 190, n. 93. [30] Bergier, p. 84.

[31] Sayous, p. 442.

of living rose as commerce increased, then the over-restriction of commerce by low interest rates--creating a situation where it would not be worth the while of one with idle money to invest it--would be a step backward economically. Geneva depended on commerce for its life. The simple city-country relationship had perhaps never existed for the city, and certainly did not exist at this period. The city needed to produce goods, to sell goods, to create a lively economic climate, in order to live and grow.

I think it is impossible to know if Sayous is right. The raising of rates in 1557 is evidence that the Council was aware of the problem, and since much of that ordinance reflects Calvin's views, it would be possible to argue that Calvin was flexible in this regard, and able to protect the peasant at the same time. That Beza, after Calvin's death, permitted a merchant exposed to different conditions in foreign parts to adjust his borrowing and lending to those conditions; and that one might loan at higher rates to merchants "who know quite well how to make their profits," would be further evidence that Sayous is wrong. But the prohibition of the office of money-lender and the extremely antagonistic position of the post-Calvin pastors imbued with his attitudes toward even the city-owned bank, indicate that he may well be right. R. H. Tawney says Calvin's views "...can have offered

but tepid consolation to the devout money-lender"; and, "there have been ages in which such doctrines would have been regarded as an attack on financial enterprise rather than as a defense of it."[32] Hence it is impossible to know whether the future prosperity of Geneva owed much to Calvin's recognition of economic facts, or to merchants in a good position who created wealth despite the arguments of Calvin and Beza. Sayous and Tawney see Calvin as too rigorous, "too Jewish" for the good of commerce in Geneva. But I wonder, then, at the paradox or accident that a Reformer (or, counting Beza, two Reformers) so implacably hostile to the needs of a developing commerce should have ruled the church and influenced society in the city where commerce did quite well.

Another problem with the usury edicts of Geneva was the failure of several of the pastors to comply with them. Calvin thought it unseemly for a pastor to lend at interest at all, even the legal rate was frowned upon though not legislated against; while usury, as we have seen, was an intolerable vice. Robert M. Kingdon has shown that several of the pastors in Geneva in the middle of the sixteenth century lent at the legal rate of interest (Jean Gerard in 1557 and Jacques Ruffy in 1568), and one of the most influential, Nicho-

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[32]Tawney, p. 94.

las des Gallars, lent money at a usurious rate and escaped punishment. Des Gallars, till Beza's arrival the most influential pastor after Calvin, lent 300 florins in 1554 and received 447 in repayment in 1560. This was a simple rate of a little over 8% per year, or a bit over 6.67% if compounded annually. Compounded annually the 6.67% would not have been usurious according to the 1557 edict, but the return was a bit higher than that and was clearly not as low as the going rate when the money was loaned. Kingdon's conclusion is worth quoting:

> Just as early Italian capitalism was probably encouraged by the example of the Renaissance papacy in circumventing its own strict canonical regulations by ingenious casuistical arguments that made it possible for it to engage in large-scale banking, so Protestant businessmen may have been encouraged to engage more openly and energetically in capitalistic enterprise by the example of individual Calvinist ministers willing to seek personal financial profit.[33]

I think that the question of illegality is a difficult one to prove and evidently was not brought up by anyone. But the very fact that these pastors were so willing to use their money for profit rather than lending without expecting anything in return, may well have encouraged the Genevan bourgeoisie in their pursuit of the treasures of this world.

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[33]Robert M. Kingdon, "The Economic Behavior of Ministers in Geneva in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte, 50 (1959), p. 39.

D. The Regulation of Wages and Industry

Calvin, like Luther, wanted to return to the simplicity of the Gospel in the matter of feast days. For both there was only one day of rest, Sunday, the day of Resurrection.[34] This meant the loss of about a dozen festival days for a worker who left France and went to Geneva. The definitive rule was first promulgated on 4 June 1537:

> Here it is said that some people are celebrating festivals, and it is ordered that each ought to work as has already been proclaimed without celebrating festivals except on Sunday, and this should be commanded district by district under penalty.[35]

This did not mean, of course, that workers slaved six days a week from dawn to dark without surcease. For one thing, Wednesday morning contained a worship service obligatory enough to merit the day to be called "the day of prayer," and no one was supposed to be working till after worship was over. In

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[34]Luther wrote: "All festivals should be abolished, and Sunday alone retained. If it were desired, however, to retain the festivals of Our Lady and of the greater saints, they should be transferred to Sunday, or observed only by a morning mass, after which all the rest of the day should be a working-day. The reason is this: The feast-days are now abused by drinking, gaming, idleness, and all manner of sins, so that on the holy days we anger God more than on other days, and have altogether turned things around; the holy days are not holy and the working days are holy, and not only is no service done to God and His saints by the many holy days, but rather great dishonor." An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility, in Three Treatises, p. 73. The Open Letter has not yet appeared in L. W.

[35]Opera, 21, 211. R.C., Vol. 30, fol. 248.

1545 there was a complaint by the pastors that the streets were full of people on the day of prayer and an edict was proclaimed that "Wednesday should be like Sunday until the sermon is over."[36] So a good share of Wednesday morning was lost due to worship. And, as we saw before, the printing workers were able to get every second Wednesday off from work, a better arrangement than American workers were getting till after the last war. It is clear that some printing workers were accustomed to receiving every Wednesday off from work, so without doubt many laborers in Geneva were used to the same privilege.

Still, there was warrant to extract from the Reformer's views the argument that taking any other day from labor was lazy, useless and profitless to the soul. And since pastors and entrepreneurs often share a concern for work--the one from duty, the other for profit--which takes little thought for leisure, we can see the beginnings here of a secularization of the other six days that will reach a horrible nadir in the mines and factories of England and America after the Industrial Revolution.

Another aspect of labor relations in Geneva was the attempt of the Council to freeze wages. According to Sée,

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[36] Sources du Droit, II, no. 824. 4 September 1545.

the price-climb in France was not understood as the result of the increase of gold and silver brought from the New World, but was seen as a matter to be handled by price and wage curbs.

> From the beginning to the end of the century, prices tripled or quadrupled. In vain the royal administration tried to apply the brakes to it by laying down maximums for prices and salaries, as in 1544, 1567 and 1577.[37]

Nor were measures different in Geneva. In March of 1559, Messieurs were worried about sustaining the university about to get fully underway, and it didn't help matters that workers were so proud that they could hardly be hired. The Council passed an edict:

> Here there was discussion of workers who are so expensive and proud, a strange thing, so that no one can be found who wants to work in the vineyards. Therefore it is ordered to make public edicts that no one may pay masons, hat-makers, nor other workers nor laborers more than six sous per day, and to women ten quarters; and when they are fed, just half that, at a penalty of sixty sous, both for the worker and the master.[38]

This tells us something about the "laborer's market" that ob-

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[37] See, p. 25, 26.

[38] Sources du Droit, III, no. 980. "Icy est parlé des ouvriers qui sont si chiers et si fiers que c'est chose estrange, tellement qu'on ne trouve plus qui veuille faire les vignes. Par quoy a esté arresté qu'on face crie que nul n'ayt à poyer à massons, chapuys ny aultres ouvriers ny laboureurs plus haut de six solz p^r journeee, et aux femmes dix quarts; et quant on les nourrira, de la moitie, à peyne de soixante solz, tant pour l'ovrier que pour le maistre." How modern it sounds! 23 March 1559.

tained at the time, and also something about the price rise which necessitated good wages. But imagine a laborer paying ten days wages as a fine for receiving too much in salary!

Two years later a similar measure was taken, indicating that the earlier edict had failed. This time it was agricultural workers alone that were affected (messieurs owned a good deal of land, or, rather, the city did).

> ...From now on prohibitions should be made against exacting more than six sous and a half for men and three for women, with a penalty of sixty sous payable both by the one demanding more than the rate and by the one who pays the rate.[39]

Here the ceiling on wages was raised a bit for men, but not at all for women (assuming the three sous to be a quarter of a florin, hence the two terms meant the same thing). Nourishment is not mentioned in this release.

The failure of the best minds of the sixteenth century to understand the wild rise in prices was shared by the Council and by Calvin. One can imagine that the edicts were generally ignored by workers and masters, indeed, the omission of any but agricultural workers in the second edict probably indicates failure to legislate with any result in the burgeoning industries of Geneva.

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[39]Cited by Roget, VI, 193. Not in Sources du Droit. It was about this time that the Council arbitrated the wages of the ribbon-makers.

In order for the edicts limiting wages to have any effect, the Council also was forced to ban labor unions, formed by disgruntled workers to pressure the masters to grant higher wages and better working conditions. Geneva had never had the strong guild-system worked out in other parts of Europe several centuries earlier. According to Antony Babel, doyen of Geneva's economic historians, the associations of workers in Geneva prior to the Reformation had never had the regulative power usually associated with guilds. There were such organizations, of course, which celebrated the conferring of masterships, had masses said for the dead, and functioned in other quasi-religious and social ways. But regulative associations gained no control in Geneva and neighboring French cities till the last half of the sixteenth century.[40] Those that did get a start were promptly banned by messieurs on 23 March 1559. After putting the freeze on wages, the Council added this as an afterthought:

> Item: that no laborer nor other workers may plot together in order to divert the course of the above proclamations and ordinances, under penalty of being chastized according to the exigency of the case.[41]

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[40] Babel, p. 9-14.

[41] Sources du Droit, III, no. 981. "Item que nul laboureur ny aultres ouvriers n'ayent à faire complot ensemble pour divertir le cours desd. cries et ordonnances, sus peine d'estre chastié jouxte l'exigence du cas." 23 March 1559.

A similar prohibition had earlier been made against both masters and journeymen of the printing industry, and the definitive printing ordinance of 1560 reinforced that ban, especially with regard to uniting together to form a wage scale.[42] The summer of 1561 witnessed a lot of squabbling between masters and journeymen, specially over Wednesdays off, and charges that some workers used pressure tactics to force others to join with them were hurled about.[43]

Perhaps we can say again that the larger solidarity of the community demanded that all lesser solidarities be squelched. This sounds fine in practice, and something like this is what Calvin and the Council had in mind. It worked against employers and employees alike, being equitable in its condemnation of all complots that would create a power structure within the community. Unfortunately, as we have learned, such power structures need to be formed by the oppressed and those in sympathy with them to overcome the tendency for those on the top of the economic and social heap to have the ear of the magistrates or to be the magistrates. That this did not happen in Geneva was due to the powerful concern for the poor and outcast on the part of the pastors in Geneva, a concern

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[42] Supra, p. 224, for 1557 edict; p. 227 for this aspect of the Printing Ordinance.

[43] Chaix, 39,40. One worker so accused was said to debauch others by attempting to get others to join.

that protected them at least till the death of Beza in 1605.

A brief comparison might be drawn with the situation in Lyons. In that city the printing workers were drawn to the Reformation, according to Natalie Z. Davis, because of its emphasis on literacy, especially the reading and interpretation of the Bible, and because these rootless men needed a feeling of religious equality more akin to the democracy of Protestantism than the autocracy of the Catholic Church.[44] This latter was expressed particularly well in the participation urged by the Reformers in the service of worship. So when the city became Protestant in 1562, they were more than willing to go along, having taken an active hand in the revolt. But Catholicism was re-established by 1564 and many of the printing workers had become disenchanted with Protestantism. Why? She gives several reasons. First, that the printing workers saw the Protestant leaders losing their faith in the ability of the menu peuple to understand and make decisions on the basis of the Word of God; secondly, that the elders and surveillants of the church there under Viret were of a higher social status and did not seriously consider the workers as potential leaders; finally, that the standards of virtue set by the Reformers were too genteel, not in accord

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[44] N. Z. Davis, "Protestantism and the Printing Workers of Lyons," p. 431-446.

with the boisterous, Epicurean tastes of the workers, who loved to sing both Psalms and bawdy chants about the streets of a night.[45] I think she should have mentioned in this connection an important consideration, something she dwells upon for considerable length elsewhere--that the labor reforms they saw made under Reformation leadership in Geneva were not carried out in Lyons. Instead, the confraternities were actually banned (they had only been theoretically banned under Catholic leadership), so that when the workers struck again in 1570-2 the issues were the same as thirty years before--wages, payment in kind, undue use of apprentices in place of journeymen, and days off--mostly issues settled by the Geneva ordinance of 1560 for over two hundred years.[46]

In one city the banning of unions made little difference because the pastors were anxious that the workers be treated well. But in Lyons the short Reformed rule provoked no secular reforms to speak of, and the allegiance of the workers was in great measure lost.

E. Conclusion

R. H. Tawney speaks of the "Cannon balls of Christian Socialism" hurled by the Venerable Company of Pastors at the

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[45] Ibid., 473-485.

[46] Ibid., 376, 390, 402.

city Council.[47] For the most part one can easily agree with his definition. The instincts of Calvin and the pastors were on the side of the oppressed. After all, they were students of the heady wine of the Scripture, and Amos and Hosea were open books to them. But in some instances we now see that their views led to confusion, viciousness and economic oppression. We can hardly fault them for not knowing what caused inflation. Our country still can't decide whether to damn MacDonald or curse Fairless when steel prices go up. But Calvin's concern for the solidarity of Christian society made the possibility of political, ecclesiastical and economic oppression very real for the dissenter, for even the venial deviate. The shocking lack of concern for elemental human rights which sometimes whispers from the meetings of Consistory or Council, or screams from l'Evêché, is totally inconsistent with the rule of charity which was so much a part of Calvin's social and economic ethic.

We need another chapter to examine this more critically.

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[47] Tawney, p. 107.

CHAPTER V

SUCCESS AND FAILURE: A CRITIQUE OF THE PERMEATION OF CALVIN'S THOUGHT

One has only to glance at the size of the preceding chapters to see that the author counts the positive results of Calvin's views on Genevan society far more important than the failures. However, the present chapter will attempt to answer the problem raised in the preceding chapter about Calvin's failures. The success, the positive results of his views, will not be neglected, but are not so puzzling. If the Christian Gospel, which proclaims the love of God to be inextricably bound up with Jesus Christ, whose compassion for humankind took him even to the Cross; if this good news will not have a beneficial effect on men in society when once it grips a man of Calvin's stature--then it is of dubious value. That it did, for the most part, have this salutary effect is the main thesis of this paper. But the Gospel at times became a club, an excuse for torture and death, for foolishness and insensitiveity. What went wrong?

In the following pages, we shall briefly examine two

ways of interpreting our data, and these will give way to the crux of the problem; Calvin's Doctrine of Christ.

A. A Socio-economic Critique

Economists speak of three ways of evaluating an economic model: its conformity with the economic facts of life; its acceptance by contemporary policy-makers; and its inner-consistency. We shall examine Calvin's socio-economic views under these three headings.

First, how did Calvin's views conform with the facts of life in his age? Economically considered, we can see some problems. Calvin was neither by profession nor interest what we would call a scientific student of economy. Nor was anyone else in his period. He had a high view of the value of commerce for his day, particularly among theologically-oriented persons. In this respect he was in tune with the direction of European progress, where the growth of larger economic units through the emergence of the great nation-states, plus the discoveries of huge amounts of precious metal in the New World and the complete exploitation of the silver mines of Germany, all contributed to the tremendous burst of commercial traffic which Geneva was already party to. His views on usury tended to be realistic in principle, but probably were repressive in practice.

Calvin's ideal society--and one he helped mold in

Geneva--was very protectionist or paternalistic. Again, we can say this was in general conformity to his time, and was an expression for Calvin of the common good which the biblical message made clear to be God's plan for the life of men.

We have already examined hit-and-miss the second criterion: the acceptance of his views by the city's policy-makers. Like Adam Smith, but unlike the French Physiocrats, we see that Calvin's views made a tremendous impact upon the leadership of his day. The Council was responsive to the pastors, and particularly to the head of that venerable company. After the defeat of the Perrinists, the influence of Calvin looms over Geneva like the mountains at her back. He was consulted about almost everything--literature and laws, troops and taverns, finances and furnaces; name it, and Calvin was involved. After his death that influence was extended (though not quite so persuasively so) in the person of Theodore Beza, who remembered not only the name, but also the aim of Calvin as he and the other pastors aimed their "cannon balls of Christian Socialism" at <u>messieurs</u> when they stepped out of line.

The third criterion, inner consistency, reveals the flaw in Calvin's generally benevolent social creed. How bound together in common humanity and by Christian compassion is worldly society; how inter-dependent and compassionate is hu-

man existence! But Calvin's influence promoted woe as well as weal. In Geneva the tie that binds often turned out to be a noose; Christian discipline degenerated into pettiness, foolishness and even cruelty for the sake of the faithful, and in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. There was more here than the problem which every society faces of balancing society's rights and the individual's. In Geneva the b alance was not maintained. Contemporaries of lesser acumen than Calvin in neighboring cities were perplexed by this rigor that, had Paul applied it, (Haller said) would have excommunicated every person in Corinth.

So this critique leaves us where we began. By every standard Calvin rates pretty high. Geneva was a much better city for Calvin's presence. But the dark splotches are exposed, not explained, from this vantage point.

B. A Political Critique: Church and State

We have returned time and again in this dissertation to take another look at Calvin's view of the relationship of the church to the secular state. We have seen that Calvin had a high regard for the honor of the state and its rightful leaders, and that his regard for the secular was so great that he did not propose to place the church over it. Yet he saw the church as independent in its sphere, in no way subservient to the realm, the great fault he thought he detected in Ger-

many and England, as well as in the Catholic countries. The two were to exist side by side, serving and ruling the same people, with mutual respect and aid. The church did not attempt to prescribe civil laws, nor the state to usurp spiritual discipline. But the church preserved its right to speak as a church to the state, not just through the influence it exerted on individual Christians who might be magistrates. It is this last insistence that has called forth the term theocratic.

I would defend this as a constructive approach on the part of Calvin, one that we see arising wherever his influence was felt, though one sometimes perverted, as any other approach in this area has been perverted. This surely is part of the reason for the terrific ferment Calvin's influence had in nation after nation: overthrow of government in the Low Countries, Scotland and--after a fashion--in England; revolution and war in France and the Low Countries. The theocratic stance may be seen in Knox and his arguments with Mary, Queen of Scots; in the ministers at the Westminster Assembly haranguing the members of the Long Parliament; in the theocracy of New England, where the attempt to weld an inclusive society to an exclusive, non-Calvinist ecclesiology, produced so much bitterness and loss. Milton Powell has shown that in the Methodist Episcopal Church in the twenty years prior to our Civil War it was the avowedly theocratic, New England leaders

who rejected the conservative approach to slavery--the attempt to evangelize the souls of men within a sinful institution--and consciously adopted a theocratic stance over against an evil legal and political institution. Men like Gilbert Haven consciously chose the New England Congregational and Calvinistic approach to the political realm, convinced that it was wrong to think Christian responsibility could be exercised only by individuals in their private capacity as citizens.[1] One of the few bright spots in the German church's response to nazism was the Barmen Declaration of 1934, where Lutheran, Reformed and United Churches spoke formally against the government's ecclesiastical position.

Even today that theocratic stance is responsible for forcing Presbyterian Churches in this country to make public statements of policy in the political and social arena, not just for the sake of its members, but also for the eyes and ears of the world. And the genius for making statements which anger many by the National Council of Churches reflects this same concern of the church for the world. That Presbyterians often dislike such directives and write articles attempting to show that Calvin "...believed that the Church should not

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[1]Milton Powell, "The Abolitionist Controversy in the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1840-1864." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, State University of Iowa, 1963. See especially, Chapter VII, "The Theocratic Challenge," p. 170-195.

become involved in outside affairs," is not strange.[2] But it would be strange if Calvin's troop ceased such activity because someone didn't like it, or considered such unspiritual activity to be outside the province of Christ's Church.

But critics, and critical adherents to Calvin's view of the role of the church vis à vis the state, point out that the approach has often been accompanied by a spirit not of Christ at all--a spirit which wants the church not to minister, but to be ministered unto. In Geneva one is constantly aware that the church must be protected, her purity must be insured by the state, her status must be recognized and her ministers protected from harsh criticism and searching opposition. The student of Medieval History does not find this surprising, but the student of the New Testament finds nothing in Christ that justifies his Body to ask and demand such coddling and ornamentation. One may call this a "medieval barnacle" if one wishes, but Calvin had turned back to the sources, back to the New Testament and to the early church

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[2] J. Howard Pew, "Our Reformation Heritage," Christian Economics, Vol. XVI (October 20, 1964), 1. Mr. Pew suggests that the two reasons our nation is losing its precious Reformation heritage are that "the Church no longer strongly believes the Bible to be the very Word of God, and too, because she has left her proper spiritual sphere to meddle with social, economic, and political matters." How a Presbyterian layman who sponsors Genevan Reformation research ever dug this out of the facts will remain one of the mysteries of our time, though certainly a minor one.

which had no status, few defenders, and precious little protection; nor demanded anything but freedom to preach and teach in defiance of all that state or society could do. In a nutshell: the New Testament advocates for Christians a positive approach to the state, praying for authorities and railing against them; but one searches in vain for any hint that the church can expect the privileges that Calvin demanded. Why did the barnacles remain?

C. A Theological Critique: Calvin's Christology

One could approach this problem from several directions. If these are medieval barnacles, then how did the church before Calvin come to demand the position expressed in Unam Sanctum? What was Calvin carrying over that threw his views out of shape and contributed to the problems we have raised? But our approach is a different one: we shall try to see if there was in Calvin's theology anything that might have caused the perversions we have noted, or at least have kept Christian love from wider application. If we can ascribe the benefits of the Calvinist regime to a theology grounded in God's justice and love, then it may be possible to find the defects have their roots there as well.

I have chosen, for this purpose, to study Calvin's Christology, his understanding of God's supreme Word to man,

the Incarnation of God, the Divine humanization.[3] Christology is central in Christian theology. Here, after all, is the primary revelation of God, who may have spoken to man in many and various ways, but spoke finally in His Son. It is in Christ that we see normatively what God is like, what He intends. The whole New Testament is the primary witness to God in Christ reconciling the world, and Christian theology has generally understood the Old Testament to be fulfilled in Him, its obscurities illuminated, its savageries corrected, and Yahweh's Word to the prophets now become human.

Not to overstate an hypothesis, let us say that there is in Calvin's Christology a lack of divine involvement in the sin and despair of humanity which is curiously like the lack of rapport with sinful man seen in Calvin's Geneva. Let us examine his understanding of the Person of Christ more closely.

Following rather carefully the decree of the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), Calvin's understanding of Christ ex-

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[3]The question may arise, Why look there? I'm not sure I can trace my decision to study Christology to any one influence. It did not come, so far as I know, from the study of Barth, though it might have. However, after studying the Institutes with this in mind, and after hours of search in Calvin's Commentaries, particularly laboring over the difficult spots for Christology in the New Testament, and arriving at certain conclusions, I was delighted to find that a writer under the influence of Barth, Paul van Buren, in his doctoral dissertation at Basel, has expressed what I perceive. His thesis has been printed as Christ in Our Place: the Substitutionary Character of Calvin's Doctrine of Reconciliation (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1957).

presses clearly both his divine and human natures:

> ...God's natural son fashioned for himself a body from our body, flesh from our flesh, bones from our bones, that he might be one with us. Ungrudgingly he took our nature upon himself to impart to us what was his, and to become both Son of God and Son of man in common with us.[4]

The picture of the atonement Calvin offers is Anselmic, with the twin ideas of substitution and satisfaction clearly affirmed. He represents Christ as presenting

> our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God's righteous judgment, and, in the same flesh, to pay the penalty that we had deserved.[5]

Like Luther, Calvin was apparently convinced that the only true knowledge of God was the knowledge of God in Christ <u>for us</u>. Witness the following epistemological statements:

> [In Scripture] he is shown to us not as he is in himself, but as he is toward us.[6]

> In this ruin of mankind no one now experiences God either as Father or as Author of salvation, or favorable in any way, until Christ the mediator comes forward to reconcile him to us.[7]

> For it is not so much our concern to know who he is in himself, as what he wills to be toward us.[8]

But, strangely enough, Calvin <u>seemed</u> to know a great deal about God apart from Christ; or, at least, the outline of the <u>Institutes</u> is such that he can write for some 400 pages before

[4] <u>Institutes</u>, II, xii, 2.
[5] <u>Ibid</u>., II, xii, 3.
[6] <u>Ibid</u>., I, x, 2.
[7] <u>Ibid</u>., I, ii, 1.
[8] <u>Ibid</u>., III, ii, 6.

he deals with this central issue in theology. Van Buren notes the same problem:

> Calvin begins his treatment of the doctrine of Reconciliation with the problem of fallen man. It is not self-evident, however, that this should have been his starting place. Calvin has established in Book I of his Institutes that the knowledge of God must precede the knowledge of man, and it is precisely this knowledge of God that has been lost to man, and which now can be recovered only by means of God's Word, faithfully heard. In Christ, that is, we learn what we were out of Christ. Would it not have been better, therefore, to begin with the solution rather than with the problem?[9]

This minor criticism takes on larger proportions when it is seen in the light of Calvin's treatment of the two natures of Christ. Calvin's insistence on the complete humanity of Christ is thorough-going. Not only did Christ suffer physically, but the union of the two natures was such that he could suffer torments of the soul, he could know fear and loss and sorrow.

> Certainly those who imagine that the Son of God was exempt from human passions do not truly and sincere-

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[9] van Buren, p. 3 and 4. I think van Buren shares Barth's (to me) exaggerated fear of natural theology which makes this statement too strong. Why does one have to tremor at the mere idea of knowledge of God outside Christ? Is it not enough to assert that God's prime revelation in Christ corrects, or is the norm for, any other knowledge we may have or think we have? But the criticism of the order of the Institutes is still well-taken, I think, since Calvin's following the Apostles' Creed did not force him to deal with "God the Father Almighty" apart from "Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord."

ly acknowledge him to be a man.[10]

> If Christ had died only a bodily death, it would have been ineffectual. No--it was expedient at the same time for him to undergo the severity of God's vengeance, to appease his wrath and satisfy his just judgment....No wonder, then, if he is said to have descended into hell, for he suffered the death that God in his wrath had inflicted upon the wicked....in order that we might know not only that Christ's body was given as the price of our redemption, but that he paid a greater and more excellent price in suffering in his soul the terrible torments of a condemned and forsaken man.[11]

Calvin goes even further, and says that Christ not only feared death, but his agony can only be explained by asserting that he also feared the curse and wrath of God. Calvin's concern to assert the complete and true humanity of Christ goes further than most orthodox preachers would dare from the pulpit.

But the problem arises when we ask what share God had in this suffering, this fear and horror of death. We find that at these low points when Christ is most human, closest to the depths of human experience, that the divine nature is <u>retired</u> or <u>reposed</u>. Commenting on the verse in the Fourth Gospel where Jesus speaks of his soul being troubled, Calvin writes:

> Nor was it absurd that the Son of God should be troubled like this. <u>For his divinity was hidden</u> (occulta), <u>did not put forth its power and, in a</u>

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[10] <u>Opera</u>, 45, 719. Com. Harm. Evang., Mt. 26:37.

[11] <u>Institutes</u>, II, xvi, 10.

> sense rested, that an opportunity might be given for making expiation....He feared, not because he was forced to, but because of His own accord He had subjected Himself to fear. Yet we must believe it was not in pretense but in truth that he feared.[12]

When he writes of Jesus' denial of omniscience--the litmus test for examining a man's Christology--Calvin again asserts the true humanity of Christ, but in such a way as to pull back his divinity:

> We must endeavor to find some other meaning which is more suitable [than the Arian claim that Christ did not know the last day]....We know that in Christ the two natures were united into one person in such a manner that each retained its own properties; and more especially the Divine nature was in a state of repose, and did not at all exert itself, whenever it was necessary that the human nature should act separately, according to what was peculiar to itself, in discharging the office of mediator....If Christ, as man, did not know the last day, that does not any more derogate from his Divine nature than to have been mortal.[13]

To speak of the divine nature as "hidden," "resting," "in a state of repose," evidences a leaning toward Nestorianism, an over-sharp distinction between the two natures of Christ. Van Buren asserts that Calvin here again seeks to assert what God must be like by some other criterion than his supreme revelation of himself in Christ.

> Is it not to His own glory that God incarnate, precisely as God, seeks not His own glory? What is the

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[12] Opera, 47, 291. Commentarius in Evangelium Iohannis, John 12:27. Italics mine.

[13] Opera, 45, 672. Com. Harm. Evang., Mt 24:36, Mk 13:32

> source of Calvin's idea of glory, yes, and of his idea of divinity, which permits him to say that they were hidden in God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ? Has God truly revealed Himself in Jesus or not?...What other source does he have for the true nature of the Son of God, and therefore of God himself?...Clearly there is a serious problem at the very heart of Calvin's theology, a failure to carry through consequentially his statement that 'they who imagine God in his naked majesty apart from Christ have an idol in place of God.'[14]

And commenting on Calvin's approval of Ireneus' belief that the divine nature was quiescent when Christ suffered, van Buren continues his attack:

> What is the source of Calvin's knowledge, and that of Ireneus before him, of human nature and divinity that allows him to measure Christ and assign part of His work to this nature and part of it to that? Is not the humiliation of Christ the humiliation of God Himself?[15]

Our concern is not so much with Calvin's epistemology, but with the consequences which flow from it. What it means in practical terms is that God has only hesitantly entered into the place of sinful man; He is only <u>somewhat</u> involved with the human process, with human presumption, pride, anger, stupidity and ignorance--all of what received such short sympathy in Calvin's Geneva! Because Calvin tended to see God abstractly, apart from Christ, or, conversely, to interpret the concrete Revelation of God in Christ by some abstract standard

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[14]van Buren, p. 12, 13. [15]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 22.

of what God is in Himself, Calvin was able to force into his theology a non-human rigor which is not evident in the Garden of Gethsemane or at the Cross. Because Calvin saw God as withdrawn from man at man's worst moments, Calvin could also be withdrawn, unsympathetic at the sight of men in "the stink of filthy flesh" failing in their response to the love of God in Jesus Christ.

The author is aware that this analysis of Calvin's Christology has raised more snakes than we can kill. Was Calvin's Christology orthodox or truly Nestorian? Had he departed from the medieval tradition or from the Chalcedonian formulation? If he has not, then perhaps the heresy lies with the present writer, not with Calvin? All these, and many other questions present themselves to us. My own reflection is that Calvin was true to Chalcedon, that he followed scholastic theology, and that the difficulty lies with the impossible task which Chalcedon presents to the biblical theologian.[15] A passage such as "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me," or Jesus' denial of omniscience invites the

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[15]van Buren uses Peter Lombard, Anselm and Aquinas to check Calvin's whole doctrine of reconciliation. In general Calvin asserts Christ's true humanity more boldly than they, and understands his divine nature in about the same way. According to Yves Congar, medieval theology did not wrestle seriously with the problems present in the decree of Chalcedon, because it was 'crypto-mono-physite' in understanding the union of the divine and human in Christ. See, Geddes MacGregor, "The Kenosis," Anglican Theological Review, XLV, no. 1 (January, 1963), 75.

scholar to be Nestorian or Monophysite in his approach, and of the two Nestorianism has the virtue of preserving the humanity of Jesus Christ. To argue, as some theologians did, that Christ was equivocating, that the human nature, hypostatically united with the divine, knew everything--such a solution swallows the human by the divine nature and leaves one nature, hence Monophysitism.[16] It has the further disadvantage of directly flying in the face of the New Testament witness.

We may test our hypothesis on Calvin's most 'inhuman' doctrine. Calvin's well-known doctrine of double predestination, which even he called the "horrible decree," arises out of the same confusion: Calvin knows it is true and even Scripture cannot shake this most biblical of theologians. If

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[16]This was the argument used by the Jesuit, John Gerard in 1597 when he argued with his English captors that his method of equivocation had the blessing of being practiced by Jesus. His captors asked him, "When did Our Lord use equivocation?" His answer: "When He told His Apostles that no one knew the day of judgement, not even the Son of Man; and again, when He said He was not going up to Jerusalem for the feast, and then went. He knew He was going when He said He was not." His prosecutor then said: "Christ was ignorant of the day of judgment as Son of Man." "The word ignorant," I said, "Cannot be used of the Incarnate Word of God; His human nature was hypostatically united to the divine. He was constituted Judge by God the Father, and would therefore know all that touched His office. Moreover, He was infinite wisdom and knew all that concerned Himself." John Gerard, The Autobiography of a Hunted Priest, trans. Philip Caraman, S. J. (New York: Image Books, 1960), p. 155.

one turns to the New Testament passages that speak of Christ being offered to all, or God wishing all to be saved, we find Calvin backing off from the clear meaning of the passages. (As Augustine before him.) For example, in discussing 1 John 2:2--"he is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world," Calvin, after scotching "the dreams of fanatics" who make it extend salvation even to the reprobate, writes of the word all:

> For John's purpose was only to make this blessing common to the whole Church. Therefore, under the word 'all' he does not include the reprobate, but refers to all who would believe and those who were scattered through various regions of the earth.[17]

And 1 Timothy 2:4--"...God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth," etc.,--gets short shrift as well:

> Hence we see the childish hallucination of those who represent this passage to be opposed to predestination....They might have some grounds for this if Paul were speaking here about individual men....But I say nothing on that subject because it has nothing to do with this passage; for the Apostle simply means, that there is no people and no rank in the world that is excluded from salvation; because God wishes that the gospel should be proclaimed to all without exception.[18]

So the first "all" means all the Church; the second means people from all ranks. Calvin already knows about predesti-

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[17] Opera, 55, 310. Com. Ioh. Epis., I Jn 2:2.

[18] Opera, 52, 268. Com. Epist. Tim. I, Tim 2:4.

nation, hence need not wrestle seriously with these passages. Just as he already knew what was divine and what was human in Christ, and hence could exclude God from human anguish in Christ.[19]

We have tried not to overstate our case and make a one-to-one ratio between Calvin's Christology and the failure of consistency in his social theory or the protection he demands for the church. But it is significant that in both failures the same theme is present--an unwillingness to come to grips with the world. God does not quite wrestle with the depths of human experience in Christ, but is resting or in hiding. Calvin's Consistory does not quite take into account the humanness of people--arrogant, ignorant or foolish--but beats, exiles and humiliates them. Calvin's church stands bravely against the state on many occasions, but sometimes stoops to demand protection and insurance from the civic officials, as it asks the state to coerce and threaten the obstinate and weak. It turns from ministering and demands to

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[19]The argument that Calvin knew double predestination from Romans 9:18--"...he has mercy upon whomever he wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills"--is valid. But even here Calvin allowed the text to deny the context. In Paul's discussion of the "hardening" of Israel for the sake of the Gentiles, the conclusion is that "all Israel will be saved" (11:26), and "God has consigned all men to disobedience that he may have mercy upon all" (11:32). But again Calvin must interpret "all" to mean "the whole church," and "Israel" to mean the church.

be ministered unto.

We admit that these same observations could be made twenty times over in the history of the Church--especially, though not exclusively, in Catholic countries, and throughout the Middle Ages. But Calvin rejected so much of what obtained in other centuries and other lands on the basis of the Word of God. Is it not possible that the failure to make a similar rejection here is rooted in his understanding of God's involvement in human life in Jesus Christ?

In Geneva "all roads eventually lead to Calvin."[20] In his own person and, for this study, in his city's social and economic policies we see the impact of a monumental attempt to understand and appropriate the Word of God for human activity. Despite some dark spots, we would not apologize for the impact this man and his city have had on the world during the past four centuries. Perhaps as those churches which call themselves Reformed bring their insights into today's movement for church unity, this concern for man in the world will profit the whole Church of Christ.

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[20]Monter, p. 118.

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